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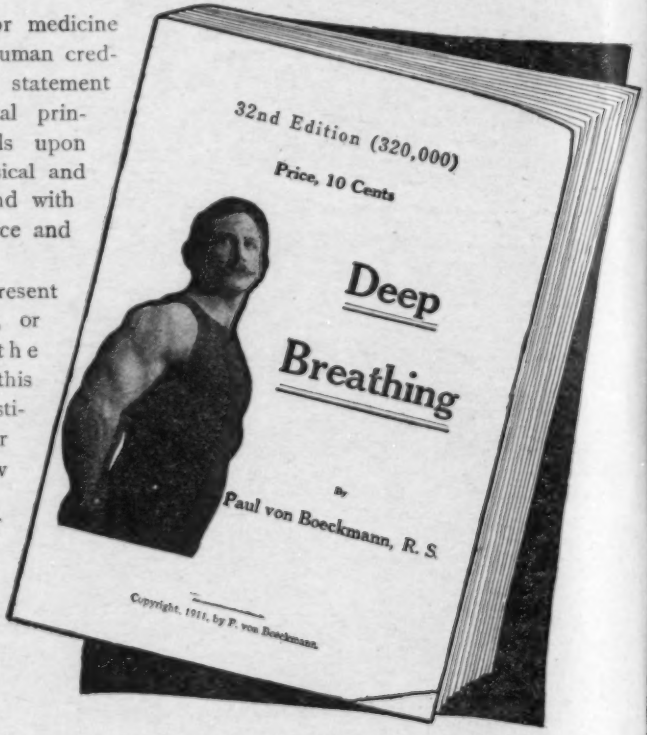

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Who Hath Eyes to See*

JUDITH GRAVES WALDO

WHEN all the foothills showed feathery white with the blossoms of the *chemisal* and the Indians were going up for the full-headed young shoots of the *mescal* on the farther slopes, Mexican Louie and his drivers took up the big bunch of Texas cattle that had cropped the river lands of the Mojave black, and drunk up the river, into the high fresh pastures of the Big Bear.

Pete Duane went up with the first herds that year, riding sometimes back, sometimes far ahead of the tossing horns and wild, wide eyes of the "Texans," his broad hat far back on his head, his strong throat bare, and face lifted toward the hills. Down the canyons the sharp-sweet scent of the sun on the wet pines came drifting desertward.

It was, maybe, the morning of the second day when he had wheeled out from the track to watch how the cows were making it, that Pete noticed the Mexican had brought little Louie to make his first drive. He was not more than ten, grinning proud of the pinto he rode, and some new spurs, wishful to be always among the hoofs and horns of the herds where the easy men were nothing loth to send him to test his mettle and laugh at his zeal.

"He's too little to be with that gang—the herd's the least of it." Pete drew his hat over his face, frowning.

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"Come out of that herd, you young dinkey!" he called. "Why ain't you home with your ma?"

"Ain't got any." The boy reined up beside Pete's big blue roan, as proud to be there as among the horns.

"Who takes care of you?"

"Pa."

"No other kids?"

"Nop-a."

"Well, don't let me catch you under hoof again or I'll wallop you, *sabe?*"

"Can I stay with you?"

Pete turned a considering eye on the boy and looked him over; the well-knit, slender little figure, half grown from his ragged clothes, tanned and freckled and fearless and grinning, but with something wistful, too, quivering back in the shining eyes; then he winked at the lad, slowly, "Just so you keep from under my hoofs, too." And that night, in the herder's camp among the *joshuas*, little Louie, when he could get his voice in above the dice-pitchers', piped happily of, "Me an' Pete Duane."

Late in the afternoon the herds had watered at Rabbit Springs and were making the slopes toward Cushingbury to get an early start up the grade. Pete Duane was far ahead, close in to the foothills, the pinto's ears at the roan's flank, when it came to him that there was some unusual feature about the old Kenyon adobe that stood a good quarter of a mile from the road, high and alone on a bit of a knoll that rose just below the sheer scarp of the foothills.

"Someone's livin' there agin," he said to himself, wonderingly, for the house had stood deserted for years, the shelter for some lone prospector and his burro, the haunt of little wild things, and of Indians going up and down in their seasons. Pete stooped from his saddle to peer again, for it seemed to him that he could see a door and windows where black holes had gaped since he first remembered the place.

"What do you see there, pup, along the front where the old *ramada* was?" for the boy was looking, too.

"Flowers," he answered, promptly.

"A squaw's red skirt, more likely," Pete laughed, but the boy said: "Red geran'ums."

Pete turned to look at him sharply. "Can you see all that way? Never been there have you?"

"I can see all right—sure, they're red geran'ums. But I ain't never been there, I guess."

"Well, I been there—las' year I was there, too. There did used to be red geran'ums, but they've been overgrowed by *chaparral* and sage. The Indians used to be about there some, but it's white folks now, with them doors an' windows put in. Some miner more'n likely, an' his wife has dug out the posies."

The boy gazed on as they climbed the hill, turning in his saddle to watch the sunset fire slowly flaring deeper on the window-panes. "Looks like it was all on fire, don't it, Pete?" he said, and Pete turned, too.

"It sure does. Looks handsome, don't it, that grand color? Here's the trail that leads across, see? There's barefoot tracks there,—Indians all right. They're up after *mescal*. Been down to the 'dobe to see what they could steal, more'n likely."

"They won't steal from *her*," said the child, still turning back.

"They won't, won't they! What do you know 'bout it?" Pete looked down at him, quizzically.

"I don't know"—growing a little confused—"I just thought that."

"Who's 'her'?"

"I just thought I saw someone there by the door—a lady—a kind of girl-lady."

Pete squared about for another look.

"Nothin' I'd swear to—but there was—somethin', miner's wife, maybe. You got better eyes than I have 'f you can make 'er out for sure; stretchin' 'em a little, are you, tadpole?" He struck his spurs in and when the horses had come to a walk again after their little spurt up the hill, Pete turned with a twinkling eye on the eager face trying to keep at his elbow. "Guess somebody's been tellin' you hobby-te gobby-te tales, hey? What did they talk about at the camp las' night?"

"Nothing much. They were telling about that man down at Cajon Pass that killed that woman and then cut her up in pieces, and about the blood on his feet."

"Oh, they were, hey? Well, that didn't happen here at the ol' 'dobe, so you needn't go seein' spooks, tadpole, d' you hear?"

"Yes, I know, *that* happened at Cajon. But what *did* happen here, Pete?"

"Nothin' happened here," Pete answered promptly. "A man built the place that had somethin' to do with the mines when they were runnin', an' he had a wife that planted the red geran'ums, of course; an' the Indians was good to her when she was afraid to stay alone nights, an' by an' by she died, an' her husband was very sorry about it, or somethin', because he was left with a little kid

that squawked a lot an' he didn't know what to do with it."

"What *did* he do with it?" whispered Louie, round-eyed for crime.

"Blamed 'f I know," responded Pete. "Got someone that did know what to do with it, more'n likely—that 'ud be the common sense of it. But you see there ain't no spooks in the ol' 'dobe, don't you?"

"I ain't afraid of them, anyhow, are you, Pete?" The little freckled face peered up at him in complete *camaraderie*.

"Not by a long shot we ain't, tadpole, not We, Us & Co.! Well, by golly, if you ain't got blue eyes! Where'd you steal 'em from?" Pete put one big gauntleted hand under the lad's chin and pulled the ragged bit of cap off with the other: "Blue eyes an' all the fixin's that go with 'em—light hair an' a band around your forehead as white as a girl's eyelids, by gad! I guess your mammy didn't come from Mexico, hey?"

"Don't know," was all Louie could say, pleased and embarrassed, too, at the scrutiny.

"Never seen her, taddie?"

"Nop-a."

"Pa hasn't married again?"

"Maria's there sometimes when she ain't mad with us, but her temper's bad. When she's mad with us she stays with another man."

"Oh, well—that ain't pretty behavior, to let your temper stampede on you that way. Maria oughtn't to do so. What 'complishments have you got? Been to school?"

"Pa says I'm to go after this drive—maybe."

"Does, hey? Been at home with Pa and Maria all this time, hey? Well, can you swear?"

"Not yet."

"Not yet—an' you ten years old! Well by—"

"I know the words," Louie hastened to vindicate himself, an anxious eye on Pete's wide, laughing mouth. The mouth came together with a snap.

"Well, you let me catch you usin' 'em an' I'll knock the stuffin' out o' you. I'll wallop you good! Hear that?"

"Yes sir. Can't I ever?"

Pete considered. "Well, not on this trip. When you're well growed there's a few you can use. Clean ones like 'hell' an' 'damn' an' 'devil,' there ain't no harm in them, but go easy with the 'God damns' an' only use 'em for scoundrels an' bla'guards. There's a lot more, but they're most of 'em dirty. You don't ever want to say a dirty word, tad, you know that, don't you?"

He looked into Louie's wide eyes that were drinking in wisdom.

"You say a dirty word an' part of it goes down your throat an' makes internal biles. That's what scoundrels an' bla'guards are; they've thought a lot of dirty rot an' said it till—why their insides gets awful—w-o-o-o!" Pete twisted his face and giant form into a fearful contortion, and then spat out with such graphic exhibition of internal vileness that the boy's mouth pursed up instinctively, and his eyes glued themselves to Pete's face, fascinated. "You want to watch out for that now, hear me?"

"Yes sir."

Pete whistled softly as they climbed the hill toward Cushingbury, the little lad beside him gazing up from time to time with wistful adoration into the face that frowned under the low-drawn brim.

"How's them 'Texans' comin' on?" Pete flung himself about suddenly, hat back and keen eye down the slopes on the herds, moving before the slow rising dust. "I'll be damned if two of 'em galoots ain't puttin' into the ol' 'dobe! Do they think they can get corned there? A bloomin' prospector wouldn't have more'n enough to wet one gullet."

"They've got plenty in camp," little Louie volunteered. "They've gone over now after some steers that broke."

"Oh sure—must of." Pete watched the men circle out quickly and disappear behind the point of the hill that hid the adobe from view. It was some little time before they swung in again from under the hill, bringing the runaways at a gallop.

"So they've got plenty in camp, have they? Well, I'm goin' to sleep in Smalley's haystack tonight. Want to go with me? We'll eat supper with the old man an' he'll tell us some good yarns, all about the Atlantic Ocean, an' nice spooky ladies that come right out of the mist an' warn you when there's goin' to be a wreck so you can go quick an' save the people before they drown. Can't do that here in the desert—don't know why not with all that sand down there lookin' like the sea when it ain't no lighter'n it is now. Want to go, pup?"

"You betcha!"

"Yes, it's better than men with blood on their feet for kids under age. Come on, then, let's stick 'em in."

The little horse trotted at the big roan's side, the child's face lifted to the man's in rapturous satisfaction. This was, oh, far better than the camp, better even than being among the hoofs and horns—there couldn't be anything in this world better than being "Me an' Pete Duane."

It was next morning on the winding Big Bear Grade that Pete Duane called down to Jimmie Bellows, riding, one leg "ladywise," hunched and easy, and softly whistling, ahead of the herd, to know who was living at Kenyon's 'dobe.

"Nary," was the brief response, and the whistle trailed on again.

"Who fixed her up lately, do you know?"

"Ain't fixed up. Same old shell. She'll come down some hard rains soon."

"Shake her up again, Jimmie," commanded Pete, "she had windows and a door in her yesterday, when we come by there a half hour ahead of you fellows. We saw 'em, didn't we, pup?"

"Yes sir. We saw the sun on them windows, me an' Pete did."

"By gad, we did that! Looked like the whole thing was afire. You toss ag'in, Jimmie."

Jimmie's whistle never ceased. He lifted a hand and tapped his forehead with sad eyes on Pete Duane. "Bugs," he murmured. But when he saw Pete's wrath take itself out in a wordless scorn that ended further discussion, he said:

"Well, I jumped through one window hole and saw four—five just like it, an' walked out a place for a door. Floor was took out of there six years ago or more. Guess the galoot at Rabbitt can tell you somethin' about that—rest of it, too, maybe—ain't a bloomin' piece of wood in the place, an' I should say the Indians had camped there pretty frequent. Chimbleys all tumbled into the room and they've set the stones 'round for cookin' places."

"That would sound O. K.," Pete rejoined, easily, while Louie's eyes grew round with protest, "'f you'd spoke before we come up the slope. Bet you ain't looked at the durn place this year! We come up there yesterday, too, and there was *windows* in the place, *see?*"

Jimmie Bellows put two fingers in his mouth and whistled shrilly. On the grade below a swarthy face lifted from the pommel of the saddle and looked about him, dazed and sleepy.

"Say, Josy, any windows, or a door in the Kenyon 'dobe when we went through there las' night?"

José looked up and grinned. "All gone," he said; "vamoosed five year—eight year—maybe. Not nothin' now."

"We was in the house, sure, Pete. No game. There's just the old walls left," Jimmie reiterated.

"Well, dad gast you, I suppose you saw the geran'ums?"

"Never noticed no posies, but they might-a been there for all me." Jimmie took up his whistle again.

"Ask him about the lady, Louie." Pete smiled at him with a tolerant eye.

"No—don't want to." Louie was positive.

"Why not? Ain't quite sure yourself, hey?" he asked, speaking lower.

"He'd laugh."

But Jimmie Bellows had heard Pete's first word to the boy. "Saw a squaw there—an old one with a red bandanner on her head—there after *mescal,* maybe—is she your lady?"

It was Pete that answered. "Well, I wan't sure of seein' her, but I don't stand out against nothin' he sees. He's got eyes, the kid has, an' he seen them windows, too. What he says goes. I heard they're goin' to put a course on observation in the public schools, Jim. Me an' Louie'll take up a subscription for you on that. Stick 'em in, pup, this bunch is giving us too much dust to eat." The two trotted on up the grade, the dust of the lowing herds below them rising slowly over the green sides of the mountain. "When they've brought up a few more bunches an' brought 'em all down in the fall, this whole thing here'll be powdered a sort of dirty gray," Pete said to the boy, waving his hand out over the soft young green.

But the boy at his side only plead:

"There *was* a lady, Pete. Sure I did see her. I wasn't lying."

"Ain't learned to lie yet?" Pete teased down at him.

"I can lie!" the boy declared, stoutly.

"Well, don't you let me catch you—" Pete was beginning.

"I won't have to with you."

"Well, damn your eyes! Why not?"

"I don't know," the boy was growing confused after his boldness. "I just put it up I wouldn't have to with you."

"Well, I'll be—had it all arranged, hey?"

"Yes sir."

Pete Duane whistled softly, a quizzically amused glance falling from time to time on the little lad at his side. At last he said: "Well, I guess we got to fall down on our little romance about the light on them windows. There'd been a fire inside an' we saw it through the window holes an' it made the place look gay. Must-ta been it. An' the girl-lady was the old squaw whose tracks we saw there on the trail. She'd look a bit smallish a long way off. What do you say—any further remarks?"

"I bet if you an' me was to go we'd find 'em," protested the boy, loth to give up the romance shared with his beloved. Then Pete

Duane laughed a mighty laugh and shook the boy half off his saddle with the grasp of his great hand.

"Well, dad gast it all! We'll go sometime, 'me an' you', and we'll have the laugh on that corned outfit!"

"Those windows looked most like they was afire—all of 'em did, Pete. If it 'ud been a fire inside the house just the one in front of it 'ud showed red, wouldn't it, Pete?"

"That's so, by thunder, you're talkin' about something, pup." Pete looked down with admiration that brought the flooding color of breathless joy into the eager face. "There's nothin' for it, but me an' you'll stop there on the way down. Now don't forget that. Put it down in your callin' list that we've an engagement to prove up on the girl-lady of the burnin' windows and the bloomin' geran'ums as lives in the ol' 'dobe at the foot of the Big Bear Grade. Got all that down? Well, stick 'em in, then. I've got to get across Dry Lake before this bunch comes on. Stick 'em in." And big roan and little horse, man and boy, riding close, erect, with up-flung heads and eyes clear to the road, cantered away across the floor of the valley.

Pete Duane's business in the Big Bear was not all with the herds and their herders. He was here and there, all summer about the mountain valleys, or down again across the plains, arranging for winter feed, shipping or receiving stock as the case might be; so it happened that he saw little of Louie, Mexican Lottie's boy, though he thought of him and wondered sometimes as to his welfare in the rough camp of the herders. "No worse than he gets at home," he would think, but shake his head with the thought. Sometimes, as he came up the valley, he would hear the scurry of the pinto's hoofs behind his, and there would be the "tadpole", tanned, freckled, ragged, grinning at his side as on that first day.

"Hello, stick-in-the-mud, can you swear yet?"

"I ain't said anything dirty."

"Sure?"

"Yes sir."

"Know any of them dirty ones?"

"Yes sir."

"Don't think of 'em kind of hankerin', do you?"

"No sir, 'fraid of biles."

"You are, hey? Well, keep it up. They're—well, worse'n skunks, a durn sight. Want to go with me into Lone?"

"You betcha!"

"Stick 'em in then."

So the friendship held, held and grew, and Pete Duane got to look for the lad on the higher trails and up the valley. When he could, he took him with him on day trips here and there, that were the boy's delight and added to a deeper satisfaction with Pete, and a dim dream strayed in his soul, stirred by the face at his elbow, lifted wistfully and worshipfulwise to his. They still discussed the old adobe, and Pete frequently had a new theory to test the boy's faith which never wavered from that first conviction. He had passed that way since, Pete told him, but it was night and he was not sure—it did seem to him that he could see a faint light there. "I wouldn't go across to see for sure without you, taddie." Pete nodded gravely, and the boy answered with a very serious "Yes sir," and then, "Well, I don't know, but it just seems to me I *feel* there is windows there."

"Well, by gad, let's me an' you just naturally believe there is. Those poor rapscallions can play jack-rabbit through holes if they's too onsympathetic to know they's glass in 'em. We know what we know, you an' me, *sabe?*"

"You betcha!"

"Suppose we believe there is real, first-class folks there, too, hey?"

"The—lady?"

"Sure! the girl-lady and the red geran'ums. Gosh! I'm sorry for folks that can't see things and can't be told any thing when they don't. They miss a lot out of life. Ain't you sorry for any devil that can jump through as pretty a thing as blazin' glass and think it's a black hole, hey?"

"You betcha!"

"And pass a girl-lady by and think she's a squaw in a red bandanner! Holy hinties! What's the use of livin', hey?"

"You betcha."

They were nearing the part of the road where the trail branched off to the herders' camp and the boy began to glance furtively at Pete Duane, his breath coming a little quicker, the wistful look flooding his eyes.

"Say, Pete?"

Pete's eye came back from inward reflection. "You say it, bub; 'f I was to go round here murmurin' my own name they'd tie me up, sure."

The boy giggled and started in again: "Say, Pete, you won't tell 'em I asked, will you?"

"Merry mud, but this is mysterious and creepy. Worse'n blood on his feet. Spit it out, bubby, I'm fixed."

"Say, Pete—now—could I stay with you?"

Pete was all attention in a moment, his eyes narrowing in a quick, penetrating glance.

"Stay with me? Up at the cabin? What's the matter down at the camp?"

"Nothing ain't the matter."

"Don't wallop you, do they?"

"No sir."

"Wouldn't tell me if they did, would you?"

"No sir."

Pete Duane laughed shortly.

"Get enough to eat?"

"Yes sir."

"Well, what's it all about? Spit it out. Remember you don't have to lie to me."

"It ain't anything, only—I just like to stay with you."

Pete looked down quickly, for there certainly was a quiver in the childish voice. The boy's hands were busy at the pommel of his saddle, twisting and turning at the smooth leather, and his eyes were very intent upon them. Pete pulled one of the little brown hands from its task and tucked it away among his own strong fingers. "Well, by jingo, now you speak of it, I don't know anything I'd like better! Can you make flap-jacks?"

"Yes sir."

Would your pa let you?"

"'F you asked him he would."

"Well, lookee here, I'm goin' over the trail into San Berdu in the morning, but I'll be back before a week. Then I'm goin' into the Little Bear for three or four days, and I'll ask your pa to lend you to me for that trip. I'm goin' to take another horse for tomorrow so to have the roan fresh for us, and we'll shoot some of them big' mountain quail an' you can decorate your shirt with their top-knots like the dude bucks, and we'll have coffee an' flap-jacks and get some fish from the Indians—there's good fishin' in the Little Bear. I tell you, Prince Louie, we'll live high! You'll like that, hey?"

"You betcha!"

"An' we'll believe every durn black hole we see is anything pretty we like, an' we'll sass them sassy blue-jays that's pepperin' the pine trees full of acorns in their own lingo—I'll teach you. Oh, I can talk blue-jay like a native! Maybe we'll kill a rattler, too—you can kill him—an' put the rattles in your hat to keep off the headache, like mine—see?" Pete took off his broad hat to show Louie the string of "thirteen rattles and a button" tucked under the carved

strap about his hat. "It's a great remedy, I tell you! You'll never have another headache if you wear 'em. Just stick 'em in your hat an' that's the end of it." Little Louie's hand stole back toward Pete's when the hat was on again, and his eye wandered, fascinated to the magic talisman in the hat band. Pete tucked the hand up again, looking down with warm color flushing his eyes. It was a cozy thing to have in yours, that little rough hand, and the pinto, rubbing at the roan's side, somehow fitted. "And you mustn't forget that engagement at the ol' 'dobe. We'll be takin' the cattle down right after we get back from the Little Bear, an' you'll have to ride with me, of course?"

"Yes sir."

"Here's your trail. Now I won't forget to ask your pa. Say, tell him them campers down at the old saw mill want meat in three or four days. Tell him to kill that red and white steer with the game leg—he'll never stand the trip down. I was lookin' at him yesterday. Say, caution him about killin' a good ways from the herd—he'll understand. So long, boy, be good and keep your nose clean."

"So long, Pete."

It was just a week before Pete Duane was back in the valley again. He had risen in the night and ridden hard, for there had been a strange yellow light in the sky the day before as of a sand storm in the desert, and Pete was afraid that the men, eager for the towns again, might start down with the herds before the air was quiet and the wind always made the animals skittish. As he came up the valley he took a short cut to the camp of the herders, and noticed with some relief the scattered groups of cattle grazing up the meadows. "The Mexican is here yet, anyway, and his is the meanest bunch," he said with satisfaction, and suddenly felt how tired he was and stiff from the hard ride up the trail.

The men had made a snug cabin of logs and brush, well out in the open to be safe from lightning, with a separate brush shelter for the kitchen place. It was close to noon as Pete came upon the camp and there was no one in sight, nor was there a fire nor any sign of a meal cooking. Pete drew up beside the further shed and hallooed, wondering if anything was up that all the men were out. But instantly, at his call, Jimmie Bellows and José came tumbling from the cabin. the white man's face full of an almost frightened concern, the Mexican's of an easy relief.

"Hello! Where are all the boys? Where's Big Louie? Anything up?"

"The boys are with the herd—*he's* out there." Jimmie Bellows

pointed off toward the back of the shed. "Say, Pete, the kid's got hurt with them damn bulls—I guess he's done for."

Pete Duane was off the saddle at the word. "What's the matter? When?" he asked hoarsely.

"Two days ago. We killed that steer. Louie thought up here would be a handy place, but the herd came round pretty bad, bellowing and all that, and the kid went out to drive 'em off—Louie sent him."

Jimmie knew from Pete's eyes that he, too, was culpable.

"Louie, he heep damn drunk for two, three day," put in José. This was the white man's affair, none of his.

"Gored?" asked Pete.

"Not so bad—tromped. The pinto got the goring. Had to shoot him."

Pete drew his breath sharply. He stopped at the door of the shack and told Jimmie Bellows to go for the roan and to get the blankets from his cabin. Then he went inside. He had no idea what he was going to do, but he had given the direction with apparent purpose. The child in the rough bunk against the wall was unconscious with fever or pain or both. Pete would not look at the little face, but, lifting him ever so softly, carried him out into the sunshine and laid him on the ground. José came to stand near, watching with puzzled interest Pete's white face and set mouth bent above the boy, and the big hands so tenderly gentle that laid back the clothes and touched here and there with a kind of quick skill the bruised, torn flesh beneath the rough bandages the men had put on.

"I suppose you've looked for a woman?" Pete spoke at last.

"They ain't no woman up the valley—those two family, they go down las' week."

"Rip the end board off one the bunks and take them blankets an' make 'em into a stiff pad," commanded Pete.

"What did you do for him?"

"Ah, Jimmie he put on much hotta watta, that's all we got, Louie he drink up all the whisk'." José deftly combined the board and blankets into a stretcher the length of little Louie, as Pete directed, putting an open blanket underneath that could be caught up at the corners and tied. "Thatta ah very nice boy," he said at last as Pete knelt, sponging the little hot face with cool water, waiting for Jimmie. "Maria, she tell me once-a she guess that ain't Louie's boy, only just he call Louie all same."

"What?" Pete started.

"I don't know, maybe she just mad with Louie. I don' know."

"Oh, you're the 'other man,' hey? Well, whose boy does she think he is?"

"She don't say. She think Louie hope his people come some day, pay some more money. His wife that die a long time ago vera good woman, but Louie, he no good—one skunk!"

Pete looked at him severely. "I guess all about Big Louie is he drank up the whiskey away from you, hey?"

"Oh, sure," José grinned, and just then Jimmie cantered up with the roan.

"What saddle will you take?"

"None. Pommel's in the way. Strap that blanket across, and take off my stirrups—string 'em over with a strap, they'll make a bracer, anyway."

"Going down trail?" Jimmie queried, working fast.

"No, too steep, it 'ud kill 'im—the jar—something's broke with 'im."

"Well, old Smalley's at the mine, ain't no one at his place." Jimmie swung around quickly. Where could Pete be going?

Pete did not answer, he was gently lifting the little lad and making him ready for the trip.

"There's wind on the desert, Pete," Jimmie ventured again.

"Well, I guess I know that. Now you lift him up to me when I'm on." He leaped to the roan, and when they had lifted the child up, adjusted the knotted blanket ends about his arm and shoulder like a sling, supporting Louie before him with his arms, the roan's rein over his left wrist.

He looked down at Jimmie's anxious face with a strange look in his eyes. He knew that he must give some explanation, but what could he say?

"I guess I know someone below that can help him—he can't stay here an' die. Take that swine out there and dump him in the creek, and when he can understand you good and plenty, tell him if anything happens to the kid, I'll hang him with my own hands. Tell him that. I mean it. So long, boys, hold the herds till the wind's down and then put 'em straight through to Mojave."

Jimmie Bellows watched him out of sight with troubled mind unappeased. "Pete ain't drunk, but it's three days inside by the grade, and his eyes looked queer, damn queer."

It was dark when Pete reached the foot of the Big Bear Grade. The boy still lay in a heavy stupor, but he had begun to moan and his breathing was harder. The wind was coming up the slopes in gusts, and Pete could taste the dust on his lips. "There's rain, too,

somewhere," he murmured, his face lifted to the sky. "God-a-mighty, look at them clouds! They won't bust till morning though, but—I wonder if I'm a damned loco?" He was looking back at Cushingbury, then, and holding straight down the road. He had not been sensible of what was carrying him on until he had put behind him the last remaining shelter for the night. Then it was only one brief second—no doubt came up against the power that so possessed him as to leave him without desire to question.

As they came out beyond the trees and faced the open desert, the full force of the wind swooped down upon them, bowing the roan's head to the road, and, it seemed to Pete almost tearing the child from his arms. The deep, still cold of the desert stole through them to magnify the savage wind. He drove his spurs in to keep the roan moving before the onslaught, and folded the blanket about the child, holding him close to his breast. "Even if it's only Indians, those squaws sometimes—" He was saying this when the violence of the wind had passed and the roan's strides were carrying them on again. Far below, the plains, seen through the first darkness of coming night, looked one tossing sea. Pete shut his teeth. "There's *got* to be someone there! God-a-mighty, he couldn't live through *that!*" Nearing the point that hid the old adobe from the road along the upper slopes, the wind met them again, but they managed to keep moving slowly against it, Pete's face bowed over the child's for its better shelter. When the breathing time came, he lifted his head, gasping and spitting out the sand. They had passed the sharp hill-point and, straight away, a quarter of a mile to his right, lights blazed from the windows of the old adobe, and Pete yelled at the top of his mighty voice. The sound leaped down against the night and rang out into the desert sea like the clanging of some great bell. It startled Louie from his stupor and he cried out, Pete soothing him, his voice vibrant with relief: "Windows! *she's* comin' with the lantern! It's the girl-lady! There she is with the lantern!"

It was the girl-lady with the lantern. She swung it high up until she was close upon them, and then turned, fleeing along the trail in front of the roan's great strides, and was at the open door, the lantern beside her and arms stretched up as they wheeled in by the posts of the old *ramada*. "A sick child," she said. "Let him down to me,—no, I can hold him," and she did, until Pete sprang down and they carried him in together. There was a cot drawn up before the great blazing fire, as though in readiness, and they laid him on that.

"Put your horse under shelter," the girl-lady said, "there is a shed at the back of the house and some hay there."

Pete turned to obey her without a word, and, as he passed by the foot of the cot he saw an old Indian woman with a red bandanna over her head rise up from the hearth and hand a cup of something to the girl-lady; she bent over little Louie to hold it to his lips, and he was drinking it as Pete went out the door. Outside, the roan stood by the old *ramada* posts deep in some bush whose thick bruised leaves gave off a pungent odor. Pete could see the red blossoms in the flare of the window light, and he laughed. In the shed he put his arms about the roan's neck and hung there in utter aching, thankful weariness, until the animal whinnied deep in its great throat and he roused up to make it comfortable. It was then he remembered he had not said a word as to what ailed the child. "They'll find out fast enough when they look at that little body!" He hurried in again to find Louie lying with some warm white thing thrown over him and the two women, with quick, deft fingers, working with lotions and soft bandages, and all the time the girl-lady made tender little sounds to soothe the pain in a soft wordless way that mothers have, and gradually the moaning ceased and Louie was asleep. It was the leg that had been broken. They had set it while Pete was in the shed. They worked like magic, it seemed to the rough man, looking down at them and at Louie's sleeping face, free from pain at last, but wonderfully appealing in its nearness.

The girl-lady lifted her head and looked at Pete: "You have carried him so far." Some strange wonder sang in her voice and made other words to Pete, and he answered: "You needn't thank me, ma'am. I guess I—love the little bugger."

"I know—of course,—for that you were sent." It was the Indian woman that touched his arm while he stood staring, and pointed to the food on the hearth. He had not eaten since early morning, expecting to make his noon meal at the herders' camp. He was dog-tired, too, and the food was hot and comforting. When he had finished, he saw that the Indian woman had put a blanket by him and he stretched himself on that, but he had no memory of going to sleep. The wind was in the chimney with great booming strums like the deeper notes of a harp. Outside it flung itself against the house and screamed around the corners of the old *ramada,* but all was so secure that there was not even the rattle of the windows, and Pete lay and thought how he and Louie would laugh at Jimmie Bellows for his tale of the chimney fallen into the room and for his claim to playing "jack-rabbit" through black holes. They must be very fast, those windows, to make no sound on a night like this—wooden shutters, maybe—no, for there had been the light! Pete thought he would

get up and look at them, but he did not, he thought of Louie instead, and how wonderful it had been that all that way he had seen the lady; saw that she was a girl-lady, too. Nothing escaped the tadpole's eyes—blue eyes he had like—whose were they like?

Pete woke far in the night, and almost at once the sense of where he was came to him and he turned cautiously to lift himself upon his hands. The Indian woman crouched at the foot of the cot. Pete could see her eyes shine in the darkness, for there was no light in the room unless one sheltered somewhere near Louie's head; there, there was a soft glow, almost as though it came from those two, Louie and the girl-lady kneeling with her head beside the child. It must be that light which shone on the Indian's eyes for they were turned upon the two. All being well, Pete lay down again and slept.

The rain came toward morning, and the storm drove upon them for three days. Pete and Louie spent those three days in the safe shelter of the old adobe. It was not strange that Louie could never say how they passed, for he slept most of them, but Pete could never tell, either. They were to him full of a great peace about the boy, for Louie was going to live, the girl-lady said, and be well. They were full, too, of the memory of the sound of the wind, strumming its great harp in the chimney, and of the girl-lady's face with the fair hair about it and the Indian woman's eyes that followed her where she moved about Louie's cot. There was little else that he could remember, except that always when he was in the shed with the roan he thought of the windows that he had meant to look at, or the questions he wanted to ask the girl-lady about how long she had been at the old adobe, and too, that he had never said one word of gratitude to her; but when he was back in the room again these things slipped from his mind, and he was very content to live in the quiet of some presence that pervaded, and which must have been the girl-lady who turned sometimes to look at him and smile.

It was in the fourth night that the wind went down completely, and it was then that someone touched Pete Duane and he sprang up, wide awake. It was the girl-lady and she beckoned him to come: "The storm was not severe in the valley, and your herds will leave there today—you must be gone from here before they get down."

Pete did not ask her how the word had come, nor did it seem to him, then, anything but natural that they must be gone—afterwards he wondered.

"Come here," the girl-lady went to Louie's side. "You will keep him always," she said.

"He ain't mine, ma'am—but I'll see he's never allowed in the

camps again. His father's that big Mexican that will be down with the herds today."

"That is not his father." How gentle her voice was, and all the while her words said more to Pete than was compassed by their sound. "His father was Louis Kenyon. He put him in the care of this man and his wife, who was a good woman. He died eight years ago. Look at him."

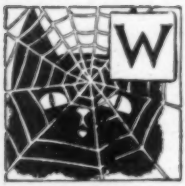
She spoke in whispers above Louie, fast asleep and breathing low and easily. All the swollen red had left his face, and his hair, which had gone uncut through the summer, lay about it on the pillow like a girl's—like the girl-lady's, Pete thought, and said to himself that he would tell Louie that. He felt her touch his arm, and he answered: "Yes ma'am,—I want him—I'll keep him always. What you say goes."

He went out to get the roan then, and remembered that the girl-lady had said nothing about Louie's mother. He must not forget to ask about her. When he came to the door again, the first steaks of day were gleaming on the sands of the Mojave far below, there was the smell of wet earth, and the geraniums by the old *ramada* posts were fragrant in the soft rising wind. The two women were waiting for him there and passed the child up to him in the blanket sling as Pete had brought him; and Pete, with the precious burden in his arms again, and safe, as he knew, leaned down and tried to say what he could of thanks, but no words came. And the girl-lady said: "You brought him to me," and again it was to Pete as though she were thanking *him*. Then—straight out of her shining face there came the reason why he could not thank her. It seemed to be the answer to the question he had forgotten to ask about Louie's mother and it sent Pete Duane along the trail with wide, unseeing eyes.

It was not until he was in the road again that he drew a deep breath and turned to look back. The sun, just on the rim of the mountain, touched the whole bare slope with light, and Pete could see the window-holes, gaping black in the old adobe. Beyond the clearing an Indian woman moved slowly through the *chaparral*. He watched the red of her bandanna kerchief against the gray sage until she disappeared among the pinyons up the slope. Far down the desert road Pete drew away the covering from Louie's face and put back the fair hair lying damp about it. "God!" he whispered, all the reverence of his soul in the word, "an' I guess somehow *he's* knowed it all the time—the little tadpole."

The Rift Within the Loot*

BY J. L. SHERARD



HEN the fast freight, loaded with oranges and grape fruit for New York, came to an unexpected stop in the midst of the desolation known as Pocomo, a weary, nerve-racked figure released its hold and rolled down the red embankment into a bed of dripping grass.

The cold, gray dawn of a new day—and a brighter one, he hoped—sent unpleasant shivers along his aching spine. But it served to drive the curse of drowsiness from eyes that the mother of invention had kept as open as the new moon for more than eighteen hours. He felt greatly revived.

He took in his surroundings at a glance. "Punk lookin' country this," he commented to himself, "but it's about the best thing I could expect now in the way of a health resort. Name, please? Beg pardon. Oh—lemme see—I'm some five hundred miles from my last alias, and I must kinder fit my new cognomen into the topography. Luke Elkin, I salute you! And now, Luke, you'll have to scoot or give up your fun, for it's broad daylight and I see a strange man comin' down the highway."

And so this disciple of the crooked path sought refuge in the land of the goober and the hookworm until the storm rolled by and other sons with golden rays were ready to shine upon him.

His spirits rose to something like cheerfulness under the spell of the crisp, balmy morning. He even joked himself as being another of those evil roomers that manage to keep a few laps ahead of their outraged pursuers, and he wondered what they were saying about him way down in dear old Jawjaw where he broke jail and the jailer's nose at the same time.

Strangers were as rare as orchids around Pocomo. The man of the highway had been quick to detect Luke's presence, and, executing a flank movement, came face to face with him at a sharp turn in the road. One glance was sufficient to convince Luke that the fellow's inner consciousness was swollen with questions like a new

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pup that had been given a complimentary ticket to a meat shop.

Luke was ready with glib answers to every new set of interrogatories. That was a part of his regular stock in trade. The man, however, proved to be merely a typical native; there was no reason to fear any danger from him, and Luke decided that it was just as well, while the opportunity presented, to card-index his information relative to the whys and wherefores of Pocomo.

Luke's mind, aggravated by the vacuum in his gastric regions, was in a state of intense upheaval. It was working like a threshing machine in conjuring up tempting pictures of creamy biscuits, fried chicken, and country ham, that receded forever and orever as he reached out greedily to take them. The man's ragged shoes actually made his mouth water. He was sorely famished.

"See where that 'ere smoke is curlin' up?" says the man, as he drew his gangling legs to right angles against the mule's flanks and dug his heels into the animal's sides. "Wal, go over an' git you some grub—if you can. Mis' Nagin is queer an' peppery, but take it from me, frien', if you'll lambaste the railroad from the minute you set foot on her shell walk, you're safe. She's got a passel of grudges against that copperation. Do what I say, an' you'll git ham an' eggs for your'n, mister.

"See that field of grass alongside the railroad yander? She makes more off'n it 'n she does her whole farm. Burns it off once a year an' sues the railroad for damages. It looks ripe for the sickle now. See? Giddap."

Luke kept his face to the ground as he heaped profuse thanks on his kind benefactor. His words rang with sincerity, but at most they were only words. He had not even a chew of cut plug to give him as a token of gratitude. To such extremities is a man sometimes reduced!

Driven by hunger and a new idea, Luke sought the home of Mrs. Nagin by the crow route, striking straight across field and brier patch and touching the ground only in high places in his rash haste to procure the wherewithal to soothe his inward pains.

He did not at first waste time in taking a diagram of the woman's peculiarities of mind and habit, but deferred the job until his artistic temperament could free itself from the incubus of cruel circumstance. As he hurried up the walk, between two rows of ancient boxwood, he acted as cheerfully as if he were chief justice at a baby show instead of marching into the arms of the terror of a mighty railroad corporation.

"Madam," he said, bowing low and smiling, "pardon this uncere-

monious introduction. In spite of my clothes and my general appearance of innocuous dissooetude, I am a lawyer sent out by the Smithsonian Institution at Washin'ton to investigate into all and singular the atrocities and appurtenances and impertinences of that cruel robber, that thievin' band of cut throats, masqueradin' in lawful disguise as the Eastern Continental Railroad. Why, I'm reliably informed that them—those robbers have got so bold that they don't hesitate to put the frost on the bumpkin regardless of time or temperature, and it's the function of an outraged gover'ment, representin' a down-trodden people, to limit their graft to the open season for such performances."

Mrs. Nagin's expression was rapidly undergoing much the same change that takes place after a thunder shower in April. The sunshine of her approval was beaming on Luke like a searchlight.

" One more word," continued Luke. "I'm compelled to go in disguise, not unlike a tramp, so as to throw these railroad trailers off my heels. It's unpleasant, but the only way to sidestep a robber is to put yourself on the same level. He never fails to recognize the profession, but he will pass you with a quiet, genial nod and let it go at that. Now, it has come to the attention of the authorities that you have been treated by the railroad people like an unguarded watermelon patch in the nigger belt, and I'm here to probe to the bottom of these atrocities. The gover-ment is goin' to fight your battles for you. With your consent, madam, I am authorized, deputized, and empowered to act as your guardian ad light 'em, shoeshine ami and multum in parvo. Can we help you, madam?"

The shot went straight to its mark. Mrs. Nagin immediately called off the dogs, threw open to the stranger the doors of her hospitality, and hurried to the kitchen to assemble whatever remnants she could find of the fatted calf.

After breakfast she dragged her victim to the front porch and sought to engage him in a general line of conversation. But the reaction from the severe strain of the hours of suffering Luke had endured at the hands of the E. C. R., superinduced by what might be charitably termed a hearty meal, was fast benumbing his faculties.

How long he had been snoozing he could not tell, but in time he was suddenly awakened by a penetrating falsetto as the course of her conversation veered, and he was brought back to earth by a remark that concerned something about "entertaining angels in underwear."

'T was Mrs. Nagin expressing her gratitude.

And then came the story of her fight against the railroad. That

was what Luke attuned his ears to hear, and he leaned back in a sympathetic attitude to get the full benefit of the music.

In many respects it was an old story. Seven years before, the E. C. R. system had been built. It ran for half a mile through the shoestring of red clay and crawfish bottom constituting her "plantation." When approached for right of way she had promptly named a figure that gave the promoters a shock like a prosecution for rebating. She refused to abide arbitration and defied the arbitrators—when they dared name a price based on decimal fractions instead of the multiplication table. The upshot of it all was an action in court, where a jury, supposed to be composed of her peers, settled the matter by awarding her only three times what the land was actually worth.

It had, indeed, been a bitter seven years' war. The blackjack field was good for only one annual burning, and, in her frenzy to even up scores with the railroad, she had conceived the plan of converting her common stock into preferred by driving a bull yearling occasionally into the railroad cut just before the southbound express was due. As a rapid developer of land and a breeder of blooded cattle, there is nothing on earth that can wave the magic wand with quicker success than a railroad.

Luke was sympathy personified and electrified. "Did you get a settlement in every case?" he asked.

"I did and then I didn't," the widow replied. "The jury had sense enough to give me damages every pop, but I'm blocked by the ignorance of the courts. Them railroads is so unjust that they appealed the cases before the foreman's breath was cold. There's fourteen cases, and they're all tied up now in neat little packages done up in baby ribbon in the beehives of the supreme court. It's tough on me, but I'll be with 'em to the end of the game."

"All the consolation you've had, then, is the trouble you've given that crowd of robbers," commented Luke insinuatingly, "but remember, you're not gettin' your hands on any of their bonds. It's a costly game, no doubt."

"Yes," she admitted, "it is takin' a firkin of good money. I've had to mortgage my plantation twice. But poor satisfaction is better 'n no satisfaction at all. I've made the railroad lawyers sit up all night, I've digested the docket of the supreme court, and, sir, by my activities I've actually compelled the legislatur' to add another injustice to that honor'ble body, thus complicatin' the sum total of their ignorance."

"But when do you expect a final decision?" Luke asked.

"Oh, some time after the railroad climbs on the mourners' bench

and megaphones to the court to cut the ropes. It's at least as far away as the milennium, it appears to me, Mister Elkin."

"You've described the situation in a nutshell," Luke approved. "Now what we need is a bombshell. We must find some quicker method of reducin' the bloated surplus of the E. C. R. I'm tired and worn out from my long trip, and, if you'll be so kind as to permit me a feather bed on which to repose my weary head, I'll soon be on the job with a fund of expert knowledge and a set of wits workin' more industriously than a senator under investigation, and we'll agree on a receiver for the old lady."

Seven hours' sleep left Luke as bright as a freshly minted dollar. When he came down the rickety steps he found Mrs. Nagin eagerly awaiting him, clad in a made-to-order smile and an old silk dress suggestive of the style of the French Revolution. But for all that, he dashed a few assorted bunches of choice compliments into her face, some of which he really believed he meant, whereat her smile became human and she was content.

Whether Mrs. Nagin was a grass widow, or a sod, Luke had no means of knowing, but he had long since attained to sufficient wisdom not to press an inquiry of this kind, just as he had been taught that it was not good form to eat pie with one's knife.

Luke had found some sheets of paper in the sere and yellow leaf and an inch of nibbled pencil upstairs in his room, and had been busily engaged in a problem in simple arithmetic before he came down.

"Here's my acts and joint resolutions," he announced, as he prepared to unfold his plan. "Justice too often has a hard and stony road to travel. This is a case in point. But the means justify the end, as folks like us, who want to do the square and honest thing, see it. This is the constitution and by-laws of the Society for the Reduction of the Surplus of Robber Railroads. You'll be the vice-president and general manager, while upon your humble slave will fall the insignificant and onerous duties of president and treasurer. Shall we now discuss ways and means, or shall the meetin' adjourn?"

"Let's go on with it, if that's what you mean," the widow murmured like a turtle dove. "I do so like to hear you talk, L-Luke."

Luke winced, and then proceeded unctuously. "I see by the weather report in this paper that a rainy week is ahead of us. Interpreted, that means, of course, a favorable season for burnin' off the blackjack meadow, and the lowin' kine out there in the pasture would look better lyin' low in the railroad cut. Do you get my gr—, my proposition, or shall I use a diagram?"

"You mean—that—er—"

"Oh, you know what," and Luke looked straight into her eyes.

Mrs. Nagin blushed. "Yes, I understand," she said simply. "Would it be wise to take in some of the neighbors? The same thing has happened to some of their property."

"I'd be delighted to take them in all right," Luke replied thoughtfully, "but we won't. Too many crooks—cooks, I mean—make the broth taste like oyster soup at the annual festival of the ladies' missionary society. This is goin' to be a close corporation, with all the profits on the inside."

"I leave it all to your excelsior wisdom," Mrs. Nagin assented grandly, after Luke had explained his proposed course of action in detail. He had won her confidence completely.

His scheme was to represent himself as a lawyer to the railroad attorneys in pressing the new claims, and, by coupling them with the old ones that were pending in the courts, to propose a compromise on the basis of one-half the original amounts for all of them. He figured that such procedure would bring in something around one thousand dollars in quick returns, and—he was treasurer of the society!

To carry out this plan of action successfully he persuaded Mrs. Nagin to make a raid upon her private bank—presumably located in her cotton stockings as she manifested so much embarrassing secrecy in cashing her own check—and pay him a hundred dollars to provide himself with the regalia of a professional, that is, a lawyer.

"There's no further need of the disguise," he explained. "That was used simply to get a good start. Now it's a fight in the open."

The big claim was duly whipped into shape after a spectacular burning of the blackjack field one windy night when the flames lit up the sky like Vesuvius in eruption. The splendid activity of the cowcatcher attended to the smaller ones.

The week following, when he was not reveling in clover, Luke was in Rockton leveling the arguments of the railroad counsel with all the genius of his forceful vocabulary working in conjunction with an enthusiasm that had passed the period of discretion. After each trip he faithfully reported to the widow that his pole needed just a teeny, weeny joint added to its length to reach the persimmon, that the fish were biting greedily, and that certainly by another day he would be ready to draw in the line.

But in those days of waiting and storm and siege upon the hardened hearts of the railroad counsel, Mrs. Nagin's affections had run to flower like the night-blooming cereus. This was, indeed, a cereus complication that Luke had not included in his plans and specifica-

tions, and between his periodical assaults upon obtuse legal minds at Rockton he gave considerable thought to a satisfactory solution of the problem. He even admitted to himself in moments of weakness that he entertained a certain liking for the old girl, but as for love, it had no place in the authorized lexicon of his life.

But what is reason when love goes to battle? A soulful look, a wisp of hair upon his cheek, a dash of *eau de cologne*—and Luke came out squarely for reciprocity.

One morning at the end of the second week Luke waltzed into the parlor puffed up like little Willie with a de luxe, deckle-edged edition of red mercerized socks.

"Lovey," he said, "I've went and done it. The fish have swallowed bait and hook, and the rod is half way down their oesophagi. I'm ready for the fry. It's easy money, and a thousand at that! Tomorrow at four, the hour agreed upon, I'll drive over to Rockton and cash in—— What's the matter now? You're actin' as cold as an ice-floe under the glare of the aurora bore-'em-Alice."

Mrs. Nagin gave him a frigid stare. "It's singular you've let the cobwebs clutter up the plural number so. *We* will go together."

Luke burst into a hearty laugh. "Of course, of course, honeybunch, we'll go together. I may be a little rusty on conjugation, but my heart's still on the right side. See here, my lady, we mustn't let the frost nip the orange blossoms in the rosebud. You need a little soothing syrup for your nerves. I'll give you a rest, and just run down the crick for the day and shoot rabbits for the sole purpose of not bein' around to worry you."

* * * * * * *

When they hitched old Dobbin to the shay next afternoon to go to Rockton, Mrs. Nagin was humming a cross between a funeral march and the latest comic opera hit, while Luke protested that he had been lifted to the seventh heaven.

They had traversed about half the ten miles and were jogging along through a dense wood at the rate of ninety jogs a minute when the widow, who was driving, drew the old horse to a sudden halt and asked Luke to get out and see if anything had happened to the harness.

He looked up at length from his careful inspection into the face of an Amazon.

"Your hour has struck, you gilded deceiver," she says, pointing a quivering finger at him. "Your tongue has undid you. You talked worse than a lightning-rod agent to them railroad lawyers, and they

got on to your graft. They're not fools. They traced up your record. You're not Luke Elkin; you're the man that escaped from the jug in Helijay, Georgy."

Luke stood silent while she continued the indictment.

"While you was down on the crick huntin' rabbits like a ten-year-old," she continued, desiring to rid herself quickly of an unpleasant duty, "a lawyer representin' the railroad came to my house, and we had a full and complete settlement of all scores, present, past, and future. I give them a final discharge, and that's what I'm now goin' to offer you. I've liked you, sonny, but I can't say at the present writin' that I favor your Lukes. Still, for old times' sake, you can have your freedom. By arrangement, I was to bring you to the lawyer's offices on the pretense of settlement, where a detective was to be waitin' to arrest you. But I haven't the heart to do it. Now, thank me and go."

"Madam—how harsh that word sounds!—since yesterday mornin' my suspicions have been risin' like a thermometer on the Fourth of July," Luke retorted in his courtliest manner. "Accordin' to our original agreement we was to share equally on this deal, you furnishin' the cause of action and me the brains. But the course of true love never did run on ball bearin's, and yet even now, in spite of your ill treatment, since you insist upon it, there shall be a rift within our loot."

He drew from his inside coat a roll of bills and counted out ten fifties.

"That unlimberin' of the artillery down on the crick was nothin' but a bunch of fire crackers in the hands of a pickaninny, engineered by your humble servant," he replied. "I slipped back to the house, climbed up the old sycamore into the room upstairs, and awaited developments. I heard the whole transaction, and, if it's any satisfaction to you to know it, I figure that the railroad now is many laps ahead in the race. I ought to keep the entire roll, I reckon, but you've been put to some expense and I'm still willin' to kindle the fire while a spark of gratitude lingers. I wouldn't advise the use of upholstery for a bank hereafter. Take this—and I'm really overpayin' you like the client of a loan shark—and remember always, my dear, that homeopathic treatment is the surest cure for a robber."

And before the poor widow could recover from the shock, Luke had disappeared in the pines.

The Girl God Made for Jones

BY MARY CAROLYN DAVIES

OU probably won't believe this story. When we tie a wet towel around our brains, and think up, and puzzle out, and elaborate intricate mechanical plots for you, you say "How realistic!" but when we simply sharpen our pencils and take down the stories that Nature makes up for you, you say they're not true to life.

So, as I said, you probably won't believe this story. I wouldn't have believed it myself if I were to hear it now. And Jones certainly wouldn't have, if it had not happened to him.

The first thing Jones did when the train was wrecked, was to swear. He swore in Tegala. He always said it was more satisfying than swearing in English, because, although the Tegalic words were not essentially wicked in themselves, they were so very connotative. I believed Jones when he told me this, for he had just upset an ink-bottle over his tennis flannels. And the little oration Jones made was strongly connotative, to say the least.

He swore—in Tegala—not so much because the train had calmly walked off the trestle, as because the place it had chosen to walk off in seemed to be a river of some kind, and the water was rising in the car which penned them up, with a rapidity which, to say the least, was disconcerting.

I refuse to describe the wreck for you. I have never been in a railroad wreck myself, and you can guess about it just as well as I can.

Presently it occurred to Jones to wonder if he were the Robinson Crusoe of the bunch—there had not been many people on the train anyway—so he shouted out, "Is anybody there?"

"I—I—think so," came a voice out of the darkness, close at his elbow.

It was a very frightened voice, and it evidently belonged to a girl. Now, according to all the rules of romance and sudden meetings and love-at-first-sight etiquette, the voice should have been what George

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Eliot, William Shakespere, or somebody, calls "soft, gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman." But this voice, though very feminine, sounded as if it could call out, "Thirty Love," or even a few golf terms on occasion. But to Jones it was an "excellent thing" and all the rest of the quotation, just then.

"Where are you?" he shouted then, and the Voice laughed a little. The laugh had little trembly places in it, as if it hadn't quite decided whether to be a laugh or a sob.

"I—don't—know," she said truthfully. Neither did Jones.

I cannot tell you just what happened to the cars they were in, because I do not know. All I know is, they found themselves penned down, with the water coming up swiftly, and they knew that when the water got a little higher, they would be drowned like blind kittens in a sack. The bitter part of it was that there was absolutely nothing they could do. Help was too far away to come in time.

The girl was a plucky little thing, and Jones stuck to keeping up a conversation, with the courage of the Titanic orchestra.

"Do you mind dying?" he asked once, quite as if he were asking her if she cared for olives, or took sugar in her tea.

"Well, it isn't that I mind dying, so much," she answered frankly, "but I don't like being dead. Do you?"

Jones did not. And he said so. Not so emphatically and vividly as he would have liked to say it, of course.

"You know," she said abruptly, with an apologetic little laugh, "at High we used to have a debating society, and the president would call upon us for impromptus. I didn't mind preparing a speech—at least not much—" she qualified conscientiously, "but I always did think impromptus were taking a mean advantage. Death's like that, isn't it? Some people have time to die grandly, while some of us are just—called on impromptu."

There was no sound but their quick breathing. Then in sudden futile rebellion at it all, she cried out passionately, still with the whimsical note underneath the pain, "I don't approve of dying impromptu—do you?"

Presently she wondered dreamily what Heaven would be like. Jones wanted to say it seemed very like Heaven to him there with her, but he had not even been properly introduced to her yet, so he felt that it would not be quite the thing to do.

He had a vague idea that it was the proper thing to say on such occasions, so he asked timidly, "Are you ready to die?"

"Oh no!" she answered quickly. "I haven't seen Europe yet, and —I was just learning to skate backwards. I can't cross my feet at

the corners yet. So—" She stopped, and her sigh was half whimsical, half regretful.

"It's a shame," he sympathized, "that this didn't happen a week or so later. These companies really make no effort to accommodate their passengers."

She dimpled. He could not see her, of course. But you can always tell by the sound of a girl's laugh if she has dimples.

"Was there anything *you* wanted to do first?" she asked, not that she cared, but just to say the proper thing.

He laughed shortly. "Everything," he answered briefly.

After a silence that lasted quite a minute, she remarked, "I suppose you don't care to elucidate?"

"You see," he explained, "I was just on my way home from the Service—a lonely post in the Philippines. Just two white men of us—Barrett and I. Four years of it." He was far away now, three thousand miles and several months away. The girl was silent. He went on presently: "And every night of those four years I dreamed of coming home, and seeing American girls again. There wasn't any particular girl, you understand. There never was. It was only that we were hungry to see white women again. Why, do you know what Barrett and I used to dream of, as we smoked and watched the water every minute? You can stand it through the day, when you've your work to do, and must keep your head and your pulses steady. But the evenings and the nights—my God, the nights—"

The girl did not interrupt him, and presently he went on, in a lighter tone. "We used to say what we wished most—of course it sounds childish to you, it would to anyone in his senses, but we were starved for companionship, for beauty—we wished for a big dance hall for just—Barrett and me, with as many partners as we wanted."

The girl in the dark was affected by this—she didn't know whether it shocked her or not, but it counted, coming from him, for he was the last man in the world to care about girls, ordinarily. She knew. She could tell by his voice just what kind of man he was. There are not so many types of men as of girls, you know.

"And now, just as I'm within a few hours of home—" he tried to laugh lightly, and almost succeeded.

"I'll never get to talk with those girls—now," he regretted, after a moment.

"There'll be the angels," she sympathized instantly. "They may not be very good company, but they are very beautiful." She spoke with the grave conviction of one upon intimate terms with the

angels, not a calling acquaintance merely, you know, but one accustomed to run over to their house to borrow the lawn mower or half a cup of sugar, any time.

"But I wanted to see American girls," objected Jones, inanely. "Do you suppose there are American angels?" Jones was nothing if not logical.

There was a pause. Then she said with dignity, with marked dignity,"I should be sorry if there weren't. Some people have died since the nation was begun, you know."

The water was creeping up very close now, and they both knew that it was only a question of seconds. Then Jones did an astounding thing. I have been putting off telling you as long as I could, but I'm afraid I can't keep it from you any longer.

"We might as well say good-bye now," the girl had just said. There was a pathetic little question mark in her voice, and Jones responded to it.

"Yes," he said, "there's no hope. I'll keep your head up out of the water as long as I can, but there's only a minute or two left, at the best. Well, we're not afraid."

Then, "Since we're both certain to die in the next ten minutes," he said, and stopped. She waited. The black water crept higher exultantly.

"I—never kissed a girl in my life," said James simply, "and—I'd like, just once before I die, to see how it would feel. May I kiss you good-bye?"

Have you ever found yourself dying with an utterly strange young man? Then, until you've tried it yourself, don't blame the girl.

The world was perfectly still for as much as a second. Then, out of the dark, a very little voice said, "Since we're dying, it can't be very wrong, can it?"

Somehow, in the blackness, his lips found hers. I can't tell you how Jones felt, because he says it couldn't be described. And Jones ought to know. And I can't tell you how the girl felt. I absolutely refuse to do your imagining for you. But I will tell you this—that she had been born and brought up in New England. So perhaps you can guess.

The next thing Jones saw was the kalsomined, dead-white wall of a hospital ward.

Now, all his life Jones had had a great scorn for the weakness of those people who said "Where am I?" when they stopped fainting. In fact, he held it truth that no one in real life ever did say such a thing.

"It's all a silly fancy of these bally novelists," he would remark cuttingly. "You can't see a play or read a novel without someone inanely opening his eyes and saying, 'Where am I?'—as if it mattered in the least where he was. It's simply sickening."

Jones had spent much brain power thinking up suitable and rational opening remarks to make if he should ever have a fainting fit or be hit on the head. He actually, I believe, craved an accident, so he could have a chance to spring upon the unsuspecting populace a perfectly logical sentence when he came to.

Jones, as I said before, was nothing if not logical.

And now, as he opened his bruised eyes, with the doctor and nurse watching him eagerly, he—Jones, think of it! Jones, the logical, Jones the practical, Jones, who sat in the reserved seats of the scorners—said weakly, "Where am I?" He was furious with himself. Then he began to swear, in Tegala, of course, but his tone so affected the trained nurse that she always looked upon Jones with an eye of mistrust after that.

Jones swore till his wasted strength gave out. Afterward an awful possibility occurred to me. "Jones," I said, solemnly, "what if you really had died, and had waked up in Heaven, and then begun by swearing a blue streak like that?"

Jones looked frightened for a second. Then he cheered up. "But," he said, confidentially, "I knew right away it wasn't Heaven, because I saw Doctor Jeremy there." And I couldn't find any fault with Jones's reasoning, either. I am acquainted with Doctor Jeremy myself.

But the girl—what of her? as the novelists say. Jones thought of her the first second of his recovery—and every succeeding second for some months.

The doctor told him she was dead. It must have been the one anyway. In the mix-up it was hard to find out much. All the other victims but Jones had gone on, and the girl was dead. At least, a girl was, and even Jones had to accept the evidence that it was *the* girl.

I think he could have forgotten the voice, but a kiss is the very mischief to get into a man's system. Especially when you've never seen, and don't even know the name of the girl you've kissed.

They hadn't even thought to ask each other's names. I spoke about it to Jones once. "What would have been the use," he objected logically, "when we would never see each other alive? And if we met after death, names wouldn't matter."

"But didn't it occur to you," I insisted, "that Heaven might be

an awfully big place by this time, and it would be easier to find her if you could ask the angels if they had seen Miss So-and-so, than if you said, "Do you know whether the girl with lips like velvet roses has come to Heaven yet?"

But Jones merely glared at me, and uttered some words that I will not repeat, seeing they were in Tegala and I have not a speaking acquaintance with the despicable lingo. Jones tried to teach a few words to me once, the ones he finds most useful, and I spent three weeks learning to say them correctly. I practiced them, walking to and from the office. And after all that, the first time I hit my thumb with the hammer, putting up a trellis for the rose-bush, I said "Darn." Since then I have stuck to my native tongue. It may not be connotative, but it was good enough for my ancestors, and it's good enough for me.

So I did not understand the remarks Jones made. But the tone he used was strictly American. And Jones is a bigger man than I.

Jones's sole object in life now was to find the girl. And he had no clew in the world except that her lips were like roses, and her voice like—but what's the use repeating it? You have heard men rave before. Jones wasn't even original. He plagiarized all the poets, from Omar down.

Every girl he met was but a potential girl of the wreck. He was the prince with the glass slipper, trying it on each girl, to see if she were Cinderella. Only the prince had it all over Jones, for he couldn't very well ask every girl to whom he was introduced, "Pardon me, but haven't we kissed before?"

He used to listen eagerly to their voices, but he had almost given up, when he met Miss Merrill. They were having a two-step together. It was a very rollicking two-step. As they began to dance, she spoke, and Jones started. The Voice! But he knew he could tell better if it were in the dark, so, as he listened, he shut his eyes for an instant. Did you ever shut your eyes while doing a two-step, with a stout partner in a crowded room? You don't think it would be dangerous? Neither did Jones.

When they disentangled the victims, Jones's partner spoke to him about the incident. And Jones was convinced that voice was not the Voice he had kissed. And he wearied somewhat in the quest. He said he had forgotten just what her voice sounded like, anyway.

Then he had a suspicion that Miss Garland was *the* girl, so he finally resolved to find out. He didn't quite know how to go about it. "Miss Garland," he stammered, "were you—did you—" then, in desperation,—"have you ever been kissed?"

"Oh, Mr. Jones," she blushed, "how dare you?" and held up her pretty lips coquettishly.

Jones escaped somehow, and it was then that he formally adopted the doctor's theory that the girl was dead.

Jones used to sit and dream of the Voice over his pipe. Which was all very well, until finally he really fell in love with a very real girl. Her name was Miss Armistead. Miss Armistead was not especially beautiful, she was not especially brilliant, she was not especially anything, except, the girl God made for Jones. I know, because Jones told me so.

Jones adored her, and she him. It was ideal in every way. Only —and here is where the trouble comes in, there was that diabolical kiss. Jones didn't dream of the Voice any more; but how could he ever tell the Real Girl about that kiss? She might not understand. The girl you are engaged to, so often does not understand such things, you know.

Of course, he would not tell her if he could help it, but this is what buffaloed Jones. The men at the club had told him that a girl always says, "Am I the first girl you ever kissed?" So if the *real girl* asked him that, what was Jones to do? For he would not lie to *the* girl.

So, though they were engaged, Jones had never asked her for a kiss. Miss Armistead sometimes wondered at it a little. She was only human.

She spoke of it to her most intimate girl friend one night, after a dance, when they were doing up their hair. The girl friend had met Jones. "Perhaps," she hazarded, "perhaps he doesn't know how."

It had to happen sometime, of course. One evening, when there was a moon, Jones lost his head and kissed her. She was very still for a second. Jones almost dared to hope. Then, "Phil, dear," said Miss Armistead, "am I the first girl you ever kissed?" She couldn't help it. Girls are like that.

"Well, you see," began poor Jones, but she cut him short.

"Yes or no, Phil," she insisted.

"No," he said, "but wait, dear, let me explain—" But Miss Armistead had heard enough. His little romance was over.

But the last drop in his humiliation was yet to come. It was at one of those idiotic Amusement Parks, and all the party were getting into one of the boats in the Old Mill. The boat was too small, and someone, unconscious of the quarrel, called out gaily, "You two will have to take the next boat!"

There was no help for it. A haughty and furious young lady

stepped in, followed by a furious and haughty young man.

The machinery started, and they had got well into the black cavern, when there was a sudden jar, and the boat stopped. Outside, apparently, they were trying to start the thing, but within, all was black and silent.

Jones was mad, mad clear through.

After a long while, the girl's voice said, with a half sob, "Phil, was she pretty?"

"Who?" cried out Jones, almost upsetting the boat.

"The other girl," sobbed she, and of course the only thing Phil could do was to persuade her that there never had been any other girl, and never would be. Which he did.

He also told her the whole story, with the kiss as the climax.

"I asked her," his laugh was reminiscent, "if she were ready to die, and she said—"

"She said," Miss Armistead took up his sentence, "that she hadn't seen Europe yet, and was learning to skate backwards."

Jones gave a startled exclamation. Then almost reverently, "It was you," he exclaimed, and—" I didn't know it was you," she said at the same instant.

Well, that's all. But sometimes I wonder what would have happened if the girl in the dark had *not* turned out to be Miss Armistead. Jones wakes up in the night sometimes, and wonders about it, too.

Before the "Amen"

BY CHARLES F. OURSLER

IT was not grief at the death of his wife that made old Gregory Mack pace restlessly through the three rooms he called his home, stopping every now and then to stare at the plain black coffin and the candles in the parlor. It was not grief that made him morose and mean and muttering; that made his soul peer out of his shriveled old body under bleared lids, and snarl and snap; that made him finger a rotten old pipe in his pocket and heave whispered curses. It was not grief.

All morning he had paced the floor; all morning he had been muttering; all morning he had fingered his pipe. Women moved silently back and forth in his little rooms, afraid of the old fellow and wondering what he was thinking about. At length he had the bed chamber all to himself, and stood staring abjectly at the squat wooden bed in the corner.

"Charity"—he snarled, as he kicked a pillow resentfully, "I call *that* charity—come and take the last cent a man's got to pay the expenses. Come with a smirk and a pityin' face and say, 'Poor man, oh dear, oh dear, and how much have you got, now? Well, then give it to us here, and we'll add enough to it to bury your woman.' Bats! Vultures! Death scorpions! Not leave a poor old man a penny for his pipe."

He shuffled to the door and peered down the steps. Perhaps—in the street, in the gutter, under an old box, he might—Enough! He hobbled down, pausing every moment or so to rest, but with his eyes ever on the oblong light at the bottom. The rattle and clattering and clanging of the street did not affright him. He moved slowly down the sidewalk, his gaze downward.

But the District Street Cleaning Commissioner of these late, these hard years, must have been in league with the charity workers. Clean, clean, everywhere; clean asphalt streets, clean brick pavements. The men in white had done their work well. Old Gregory

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Mack peered on behind posts, in corners, and under boxes, but to no avail.

As he crept on, the noise about him increased; the confusion grew greater, the crowds more pressing. Boys ran by him, pretty girls avoided him, young men jostled him, old men ignored him, as he trudged slowly forward, his eyes slanting downward to the curb. And still his long bony fingers crackled and twined lovingly, feverishly, around his pipe. And still he muttered.

It was after he had gone a great way, and his worn-out legs were trembling and tired, that he spied an empty box before a shop window. It was an oasis: a landing with a chair to boot, interrupting an interminable flight of stairs that led to nowhere. Old Gregory Mack stumbled his way through the crowd and sat down.

His battered black hat pulled over his eyes like a mask, he shrank from the gaze of the crowd and turned to examine the shop window. It was a jeweler's store—one who dealt in second-hand things, old coins and curios and such. A large sign was at the back of the window on which, printed in big black letters, Gregory read: "Highest Prices Paid for False Teeth."

Old Gregory Mack stroked his chin and stared; then straightened up and started on his way back. Yet the way was not weary, and the old man did not gaze downward, but limped on, his eyes burning bright enough to blaze a trail home.

At his door he saw a hearse and a mud-bespattered rickety coach. The first was for his wife, he knew; the second for himself, he supposed. He snarled inward oaths as he reflected that the "charity ones" were even then busying themselves in his affairs in his home up the steps. With no respectful quiet, then, did he climb the stairs. He planked his old feet heavily at every step.

There was a crowd in the parlor; something Old Gregory resented. Idlers, and street urchins, and dirty neighbor-women were glancing from the two prim settlement workers, sitting calmly near the coffin, to the dainty and demure clergyman who was saying something over his glasses.

Gregory poked his head in the door and grinned. This was the funeral, eh? The grin faded into a scowl, as he surveyed the "charity ones." And as the old man scowled, every head was bowed while the clergyman offered prayer.

The opportunity! As the saccharine tones of the preacher rose and fell in an abjuration he had composed at college, the old fellow tip-toed across the floor to the coffin. All eyes were closed, except

those of a group of dirty children, too frightened to do anything but stare.

Old Gregory bent trembling over the death box, patting each cold bony cheek of the thing within. He bent far forward and placed his own face close down to it. One of the "charity ones" said afterward she remembered hearing a croaking, rattling sound, and a sob as if of joy.

As the sweet clergyman whispered "Amen," the door closed behind Gregory Mack, and he was gone.

Harris of the 34th*

BY RALPH P. MULVANE

HE had been with them nearly a year, a corporal in His Majesty's South African forces in Uganda. The *sobriquet* of "Mummy" Harris was his, earned from officers and men of the post. And no better nickname could have been chosen. It summarized him in everything but looks. But it explained nothing, not even the curious glances of officers and men as he entered the circle on the veranda of the club.

Lieutenant Robinson resumed the thread of conversation.

"We shall be a lot of bally rotters if we don't take up their challenge, but, so help me, it's taking a beastly advantage of a fellow," he said.

Captain James tapped the bell on the bamboo stand at his side. "Fill the glasses, Ma-hi," he ordered of the Masai servant. He recrossed his legs and looked thoughtfully at the motionless lanterns hanging from the bamboo rafters. "If it was cricket now, or something like it," he observed to Robinson, "it would be easy—but baseball! What in blazes did they want to ring that silly game in on us for?"

Robinson's glance criss-crossed from the Mummy to the captain before he replied. "Well, I've heard that the chap who's responsible has lived most of his life in America," he said. "Jarrells they call him—he's a lieutenant. Fact is, I've heard he was a star player in one of the big leagues—did it for a fad, I should say."

Captain James ruminated. "It's a pity they couldn't let us go home in peace without frying ourselves to death before we start. But I wouldn't mind the thing so much if we had anybody who could play the beastly game. I understand you've got to have a good pitcher and catcher to start with. Now who in the name of the Queen can throw a straight ball for us?"

"I'll twirl for you, Captain."

All eyes centered on the Mummy, in surprise. Strange, that when

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a man is regarded as being odd, his very apparent oddness should amaze! Yet this one simple statement cast the Mummy in a new light. If the company had not been ordered home for relief, it would have afforded food for gossip over many a Scotch and soda.

Captain James eyed the Mummy reflectively, critically. He did not doubt him, he had no reason to believe him. "We'll require a catcher, too," he observed.

"I'll supply the battery complete, if you'll permit, sir."

That settled it. To debate the matter was inane, besides it was hot. It was easier to nod his head and let the battery question be considered ended, which the captain did.

One by one the veranda group dwindled, the Mummy slipping away in the dark towards his own hut.

Robinson wagged his head after the corporal's tall figure. "Notice he said 'twirl' and 'battery'? That's American, too. I wonder if—I—" He became conscious that Captain James' chin had fallen forward on his chest. Robinson prodded him in the leg with his foot. "Come on, Captain, let's turn in," he finished.

Discipline was at times lax with Captain James so far as his personal actions went. That is why he failed to awake in time to dress with due dignity to meet the 12th Company, the relieving troop, as they piled out of the stuffy railway coaches the next morning, soot-begrimed and sulky.

"What'll you have?" asked James of Captain McQuarry, after the usual round of greetings.

"What do you drink out here?" countered the other.

"Drink? Huh! We don't drink, we just wallow in Scotch and soda. You have to, out here. It keeps your mind off of the beastly country and niggers and things."

Ma-hi filled his *bwana's* glass and that of McQuarry. The men sipped the drink in silence. Within the *boma* of the post the 12th Company was being shown temporary quarters, while here and there Masai boys dashed out of the groups of troopers laden with blankets, knapsacks and trunks.

"Er—I was—er—thinking," said James finally, "I was thinking about this baseball business. Now why not make it cricket? We don't go much on that American game down here."

"Sorry, James, but the boys insist on baseball," returned McQuarry. "We've got a cracking good pitcher and he's sort of shot the ball fever into the whole company."

"Silly game, though," growled James, in disgust. "Say, Mac, I'd like to get a look at this pitcher. Name's Jarrells, isn't it?"

"Yes, how did you know? Wait! Here he comes now. Ho, Jarrells! Come up a bit."

McQuarry's voice was like the good Scotchman he was; it resembled the miniature roar of a lion in the jungle, deep, guttural, awe-inspiring when his temper was up.

A young lieutenant wheeled sharply in front of the club veranda and came up to the officers, saluting.

"Meet Captain James, Lieutenant Jarrells," said McQuarry.

The men shook hands. James nodded to Ma-hi for an extra glass.

"There's a good plot of ground just outside the post for our baseball game, Captain James," said Jarrells.

James colored and sputtered. He opened his lips to reply, then closed them tightly. If the 12th Company was determined to play baseball, they'd have to do it. The 34th could not refuse the challenge, allowed as a time-honored custom since the post was established.

"Yes, pretty good," he agreed, slowly. "Let's see. We're due to clear out of here four days from today. Suppose we set the game for three days from now?"

"As you like, Captain."

Inwardly James was hoping Jarrells would get his first touch of African fever before the three days were up. Gradually he shifted the conversation to London and kept it there until Captain McQuarry and the lieutenant rose to prepare for luncheon. Standing by the railing as Jarrells started down the steps, he saw the Mummy approaching. Harris switched his course, however, at the sight of the new officers. And there was something in the way he did it that sent into Captain James' mind, dully, the thought that Harris' action was strange. He had given one glance towards the veranda, stopping suddenly short in his pace with a salute, and had turned away abruptly. Jarrells, too, thought James, had stared at the officer's vanishing form.

The clubhouse circle missed the Mummy that night. Ten or twelve sore-armed troopers, still ruddy of face and perspiring, grumbled because the man who had been drilling baseball "tactics" into them all day long was absent. He had spoken of bunts, infield hits, "getting a lead off your base," double plays, and so on—a bewildering host of terms. He could at least have shown himself for a quiet explanation of them.

But the Mummy heeded not. In his hut, the door widely ajar, he sat facing a bamboo table on which a fat candle burned steadily.

Propped upright against a small stack of books stood the photograph of a girl—a full-figure picture in evening gown. In the corporal's mouth a cigarette was dead.

Neither did the Mummy outwardly heed the halting of steps at the hut, the subsequent rapping on the cane uprights.

"Come in," he invited, quietly. There was no change of his position, the impassiveness of the poker player's face was his as his glance took in the form of his caller. "Sit down, I have been expecting you," he added.

Lieutenant Jarrells sat down by the table. "You have been expecting me?" he gasped. "Why?"

"Well, I knew it was either a case of you come to me or me to you."

Jarrells' glance roved warily about the room, halting at the picture on the table. His eyes held it long and fast, turning, instinctively impelled, to meet the Mummy's gaze.

"It's my right," said Harris, with quiet savagery. "She gave it to me once—and she never asked me to return it."

Jarrells leaned forward. "See here, Harris, can't we forget that? Can't we wipe the slate clean? I'm willing if you are."

"I—guess—you—are," said Harris, slowly, and his voice, low as it was, punctuated the silence of the hut like staccato strokes of a hammer. "But I'm not," he went on. "You beat me out of an American League managership by lying; you blackened me in the eyes of the one woman, who was weak enough to believe—I only keep that picture to think of her as I did at first, as an ideal—and you ask me to forget!"

Jarrells tried to laugh, but the smile died in its birth. "What would you have, then?" he asked.

"I have not sought anything—not even you, or I could have found you."

"Would you have *dared?*"

"Dared? Dared what? Yes, many times over—if the game was worth the candle. But I have not cared—till now."

"And now?"

"I'm sorry you came."

The smile came to Jarrells' face at last, flickering there on its pasty expanse unsteadily. "I might ask by what right you wear that uniform," he suggested, sneeringly, defiantly.

"By the same right as you," retorted Harris. "I was and am an American at heart, from the tip of my head to the soles of my feet, but when I lost Her—oh well, I became a subject of Johnny Bull

just to get at you. That was in my first madness. Then, when I came to myself, I stuck. I'm game yet."

The lieutenant rose to go. Harris laid his cigarette stub on the table and got to his feet. An awkward silence lasted for a few moments, then the Mummy asked: "Why are you in Africa—alone?"

Jarrells laughed. "Necessity. She wouldn't come with me, and I was ordered."

"A year of this is a long time," the Mummy mused. "For a man in love that is," he added.

An uneasy smile crept over Jarrells' face. "How about the woman?" he ventured.

"It's an eternity—if she cares about the man. In your case?"

The lieutenant shrugged his shoulders. Harris faced him suddenly. "Here," he said, roughly. "You wanted to wipe the slate. I'll do this: We're to play a ball game. I'll pitch for our company, and I'm in good trim. Now then, you're here for a year. I'm on my way to England. I'll make you this wager: If I win this game you're never to come back to England—never, see? If you win, the slate is clean."

"Rather one-sided, I say," returned Jarrells. "Heads I win, tails you lose kind."

Harris retorted without emotion: "Take it or leave it. It is more than fair to you. You gambled with me once before—behind my back—and won. Now it's my turn to set the stakes—and play a sure thing. If I win I'll go straight to London and tell her of your crookedness. I'll square my name with her at least. If I lose, I'll take my chances on getting a just deal without peaching on you. That's square enough. What do you say?"

"It's all the same to me. I'll take the bet," Jarrells replied, indifferently.

He held out his hand to bind the bargain, but Harris' eyes were fixed on the picture by the books. Neither did his gaze stray. Ten, fifteen, twenty seconds, a half minute Jarrells waited, and then stole out of the hut.

Later, by almost an hour, Aharihu, stealing softly inside the *boma* of the barracks and past the sleepy *askari* on duty, found his *bwana* still seated at the table, head buried in his arms. The shiny, sinewy arm of the Masai boy slipped gently around the Mummy's neck as he whispered: *"Bwana! Bwana!* It is Aharihu."

Harris raised up with a start. "You, boy? How did you come?"

"Askari sleep," grinned the black.

"Well, well, and I must get to bed now. Four days more of this

and I'll be off on a long *safari,* my boy—a long, long *safari.* But here, Aharihu, wait a bit!" The Mummy stood indecisively, pondering. Finally he picked up the picture on the stand, wrapped it in an old newspaper—one of the last mail—and handed it to the black. "Yes, here, Aharihu," he said hurriedly, "here, take it, take it. Give it to the new lieutenant for me. Understand? He is in the club. Leave it there."

The Masai's face fell. The portent of the word *safari* touched him. It meant a long journey—with no returning. It lacked the thrill when spoken by the game hunter. Rather it spelled a journey of the spirit. He felt sad, lonely. But with soft hands he unlaced Harris' boots and helped him into bed. When sleep came to the white man he slipped out again into the darkness.

Mummy Harris was a trainer and leader of men. He had proved that in the American League, where only for a bit of trickery and chicanery of politicians he would have secured a manager's berth. He proved it again with the willing troopers of the 34th. They followed his instructions zealously and became imbued with the confidence that leads to wagering of monthly salaries. They changed places from the infield to the outfield at the Mummy's behest, chased batted grounders and "flies," and trotted out on the field on the day of the game without positive knowledge of what position they were each to play.

The nine of the 12th Company were in fine trim. While the troopers and officers of both companies and some two hundred natives were gathering about the improvised diamond, they limbered up.

Captain McQuarry was chosen to umpire. When he called "Play ball!" the men of the 34th took the positions assigned them by Harris. Into the receiving box, protected by a big catcher's breast-pad made of woven grass and stuffed with Zebra hair, and with a much-used glove, jauntily stepped a Masai boy.

Silence reigned among the troopers. But the Masai gave no heed. The physique of the youth showed in his swelling, flexible muscles as, grinning, he shot a ball to Harris in the pitcher's box and received several of the latter's throws with perfect ease. Then he whipped the ball to second base so swiftly, unerringly, that the baseman was forced to catch it to keep from being hit.

"Some catcher you've got," Jarrells commented to a 34th trooper. "Where'd you get him and when did he enlist?"

"Oh, he's a big leaguer in disguise. He's only got burnt cork on his hide," retorted the trooper.

Jarrells grunted and then the game was on. For two innings neither side scored and the batters went out in one, two, three, order. Harris was pitching carefully, and the Masai catcher scooped in outcurves, inshots, drops, and every ball alike with precision. The battery of the 34th—one, Aharihu, trained for months in the jungle by Harris for the latter's pleasure—was a perfect piece of mechanism.

In the third inning, Jarrells came to bat. He let the first ball go by him for a called strike. And still he waited until Umpire McQuarry had called two strikes and three balls. Then he swung his bat carefully, but with powerful force, to meet the last ball—and fanned the air. Harris also struck out, but he swung at each ball.

The fourth and fifth innings moved rapidly on, and only one man —a 12th player—had reached first base. It was a gift to him by the third baseman of the 34th, who was unable to field a slow grounder.

Gradually the impression was driven home to the yelling troopers that here were not two baseball nines battling for supremacy, but a contest between two men who were playing as if their eight comrades were not in the game. With the feeling of this fact, the crowd became silent and followed each flight of the ball from pitcher to catcher with strained eyes.

Jarrells got a hit in the seventh, but only a few cheers rewarded him, the men of the 12th watching only the set face of the silent Harris in the pitcher's box. Jarrells danced away from his base in glee, taunting the Masai to throw to first base. But Aharihu saw only the signals of his *bwana*. Even when an apparently straight ball shot wild of the base, the Masai said nothing. Unconcernedly he leaped to the right, caught the ball one-handed and shot it away from him to second base so quickly that the spectators could hardly follow it. Bantly, on second, caught the ball and stopped Jarrells, yards from the base. The inning was over.

Angry and cursing, Jarrells took the box. The first man up he fanned. Aharihu came next. Jarrells, sneering and taunting, threw an easy, straight ball to the batter. The Masai, curiously unmoved, leaned suddenly forward and drove his bat against the leather sphere for a clean three-base hit. With Harris up, Jarrells tried to settle down to his game. But he was flustered. Two balls were called and one strike. Out of the corner of his eye he could see the Masai stealing gently away from third base. He feared to trust a base throw, for he had seen the deer's speed in the long, lithe limbs of the black, and with Harris standing close to the plate he feared to risk a straight ball.

Deliberately then, and with terrific speed, he suddenly shot the ball direct at the Mummy. Harris ducked and the ball, going high, bounced out of the catcher's mitt. The rest happened in seconds—Harris' beckoning hand and the fleet Aharihu bounding across the home plate for the first run.

The troopers, relieved from the tenseness of the struggle, burst into a mighty cheer. Jarrells, scowling, swearing under his breath, ended the inning by retiring Harris.

The game had been won, for the eighth and ninth innings were devoid of scores. The 34th men were wildly jubilant, but the idol Harris had slipped away from the field to his own hut.

It was there that Jarrells found him at night-time. In one corner, neatly piled for the railway journey of the next day, was the Mummy's baggage. Sitting by him at the table was Aharihu, proudly nursing a swollen finger.

"You win," said Jarrells as he entered.

"Yes," replied Harris evenly.

The officer stood silently a moment. "I've come to tell you something," he said finally. "It's not that I want to break the terms of the wager, but it's—well, it's coming to you. Besides, there's another reason. I just wanted you to know that my engagement to Ethel is broken. Perhaps you know why."

Harris stared at him quietly. "Why do you tell me this?"

"Because—because I have loved her. Also because she deserves happiness that I could never give her, and because I'd like for you, some day, to tell her this."

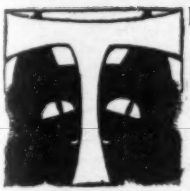
The Mummy stood silently again. When he next spoke, his voice was soft, and there was a boyish smile hovering about his eyes and lips.

"Jarrells," he said, " last night I sent that picture back to you. It belonged to you by right. But if you don't mind, old man, I'd like it to take home with me—and, Jarrells, the slate is clean."

The Mummy's hand met the lieutenant's and together they passed out of the hut. The black sat hunched up on his stool, sadly looking at a pile of baggage marked "J. Harris." Somehow, he knew that the *bwana's safari* was indeed to be a long one.

A La Mode*

BY JOHN DOUGLAS



THE time was spring. Along the pleasant parkways bloomed the first purple-clustered lilacs; upon the sun-warmed benches huddled the few lingering derelicts, most of them showing the workhouse or hospital pallor to account for their presence—for know you that with the passing of grim winter departs also the city's compassion for the mewing mendicant.

Along the Broadway promenade blossomed at intervals the premature straw hat; upon the sun-warmed curb clustered the plausible Hamlet, but now emerged from his long hibernation to repeat with proper elaboration the tales of the season's triumphs; and with increasing frequency across the many bars resounded the insistent demand for the persuasive rickey.

The demi monde, the demi train and the demi tasse languished forgotten in their respective lairs, for the passing throng sought more wholesome diversion. Truly spring was in the air and all the world was on parade, patrician placidly elbowing plebian, and vice versa, for here indeed do extremes consort right pleasurably. Oil and water do mix upon Broadway—olive, fusel, White Rock, and Apollinaris, for example.

Thus it happened upon this gorgeous day across the table of an exclusive café there met two men of widely different aspect. The younger of the men was strikingly outfitted in gray. Clothes, hat, cravat, gloves, hose, and low cut shoes were of the same soft shade, perfectly matched and faultlessly devised. The other man was a discord of color. His clothes were nondescript; a kaleidoscopic necktie vied valiantly with a purple-hued shirt, and his glaringly yellow shoes fought fiercely with his crimson socks.

The two were strangers but they soon struck a friendly balance. The elixir of spring was in the air and companionship was an inevitability. For a time they chatted casually and as the talk went forward the younger man assumed its burden. He knew New

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York. He spoke of the city's celebrities familiarly. He mentioned its notables knowingly. In his turn he paid the reckoning with celerity. All this without ostentation and convincingly.

"It is evident," said the older man in a pause, leaning across the table interestedly, "that to you New York is an open book."

The other smiled. "I know a little about it," he admitted modestly.

"And its people? I mean, of course, the big ones, the worth-while ones."

The young man nodded. "I understand what you mean. Yes, I am acquainted with a number of the worth-while ones, as you term them." He bowed smilingly to a man at the next table. "That complacent old chap to whom I just spoke, for instance, is old Rockbullion."

The other turned and stared. "I have never seen him before," he said finally, "but of course I have heard a lot about him, with his different houses and his wonderful art collection."

"His city place is a veritable treasure-house," said the young man. "It is virtually a museum, for his constantly increasing collections of paintings and curios have crowded out the family. They are now abroad."

"You have been there, of course?"

"Many times," admitted the young man quietly. "And to his villa at Newport frequently," he added as an afterthought.

"You will understand my curiosity," said his questioner, "when I explain that I get to New York but seldom. I frequently read of these big men of yours and their doings, and with all the rest of the world am keen to know more about them." He beckoned the waiter.

"My turn," protested the young man mildly, and paid the score.

"Therefore," went on the other, "when I meet with a man like you, one of the exclusive circle, it is an event with me."

The young man nodded condescendingly. "I understand," he said graciously, "and I am very glad to be of service to you." He stifled a yawn. "Rather dull here, don't you think?"

"May I ask," said the older man, ignoring the intimation, "the name of the young man to whom you just bowed?"

"That," explained the young man patiently, "is Courtland Van Gelder. His father, you know, is one of our celebrated captains of industry. Courtland has nothing to do but spend money, and that keeps him pretty busy."

The older man eyed the young Van Gelder approvingly. "He does pretty well," said he critically, "but he doesn't wear his clothes

as well as you do. Although," he finished bluntly, "his probably cost more."

The young man colored slightly, but a faint interest showed in his eyes. "Thank you," said he courteously. "Clothes, their uses and abuses,"—his glance swept the other man's attire critically—"their weaknesses and foibles,"—here his eyes rested for an instant upon his listener's rainbow cravat—"are my hobby. I might add that I have little else to do. Therefore, it is not surprising that I should have acquired some small skill in the art of dressing."

"You have mastered the art," declared the older man. His eyes took in every item of the other's apparel. "The ensemble is perfect."

The young man leaned closer. "It is rather an unusual subject for discussion—most unusual, in fact, but your appreciation is very gratifying. Not every one realizes that there is art in the knot of a cravat, or in the set of a sleeve, or in the cut of a waistcoat. In their dressing, few men take individuality properly into account. They select their attire without regard to personality. They do not give sufficient attention to the small things. Now, in the selection of a handkerchief, or a scarf pin, or a cravat I exercise as much care as I do in the choice of my wines or touring cars.

"I have given the subject much consideration," he went on modestly, "but I concede a great deal to my haberdasher. You have probably heard of Hawkins—No? Well, if you are interested, try him. He will do wonders for you."

The older man laughed. "I guess I am hopeless," he said. "I can appreciate correct clothes, but I can't wear them."

"Try Hawkins," insisted the young man. "Candidly, you need attention. Now, your cravat—"

The older man interrupted laughingly. "Don't trouble," he said pleasantly. "I am beyond redemption and I know it."

"Not at all," objected the young man politely. "Hawkins is a wonder. He'll set you up correctly. Why," he went on with a near approach to enthusiasm, "as regards dress he is the last word. Hats, boots, waistcoats, cravats, everything, precisely right. A different outfit for every hour in the day and every day in the week, with all the accessories to conform.

"He is abroad most of the time, frequenting the fashion-centers of Europe, studying the styles. They know him over there, I understand, as a wealthy American of leisure. I am told that he has a continental reputation for correctness and that kings and princes copy his attire."

"You know him, of course?"

"Quite well," admitted the young man. "In fact, he has many times personally favored me with timely hints. He is seldom seen about the shop. Spends most of his time at the clubs and cafés when here. I run across him frequently at these places and am greatly indebted to him for many valuable suggestions.

"You may not know," he went on confidentially, "that there is in New York a certain charmed circle composed exclusively of the city's correct dressers. In number we are less than a dozen and we dictate the fashions. We have lowered the social barriers to admit Hawkins. Ordinarily a man in trade would not be recognized, but his sartorial accomplishments have won for him the recognition that he could not have otherwise obtained. Upon the plane of correct attire we accept him as an equal. It is our tribute to the art of dressing."

He consulted his watch and arose. "I have an engagement to keep," he explained as he drew on his gloves. "We may meet again. In case we do, my name is DePuyster."

"I must thank you for an interesting chat, Mr. DePuyster," said the older man. "You have revived my hopes. I am almost convinced that this wonderful Hawkins can do something for me. Perhaps I may run into you at his shop one of these days."

He watched the young man musingly until he passed from view. "The real thing," he commented admiringly. He sat there for some time thinking. "DePuyster," he muttered thoughtfully. "The name sounds familiar but I can't place him. One of the swells undoubtedly."

He arose to leave. Not until then did he discover the small square of pasteboard upon the floor by the young man's chair. He picked it up. It was a business card and read:

REGINALD SWARTOUT DEPUYSTER

CITY SALESMAN
WITH
HAWKINS, THE HABERDASHER

He smiled slightly, then shook down his ill fitting trousers and started for the door. The head waiter met him, spoke to him deferentially, and opening the door, bowed low

"Good night, Mr. Hawkins," he said.

His Middle Name*

BY DAVID A. WASSON

N the Riverport slums it was hinted that the family tree of the house of Lawrence had not always been afflicted with dry-rot. There being no visible way of corroborating this rumor, it was usually received with winks. On the other hand, if one had observed that the family had fallen upon evil days, one would not have been disputed and with good reason. In truth, the sole Lawrence claim to bare respectability, and that a somewhat startling one, was its alleged descent from the martyred hero of the Chesapeake-Shannon fight.

But as Lawrence Senior, stevedore for the Northeastern Lumber Company, possessed some lingering sense of the fitness of things he refrained from exploiting the fact during his sober intervals before pay-day, and what he said after pay-day carried little conviction except with twelve-year-old Jim, better known as Stub, his own abused, neglected, and motherless son and heir.

Stub had evidently been to school enough to realize what his family distinction meant, though it was an open question when he had done so. His most apparent attribute was a pathetic devotion to his worthless parent. However, the brawny little scion of the tottering house of Lawrence held the leadership of his "Riverbank Gang" through an ability to enforce his claims upon a following more discreet than valorous. That is to say, his subjects never thought it politic to dispute in his hearing Stub's pugnacious and oft-repeated assertion: "'Don't Give Up De Ship' is me middle name; see?"

A long considered intervention by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children came at last, and opportunely, for Lawrence Senior was indulging in his favorite pastime of beating-up his offspring. Loyal Stub, however, emptied the contents of an ample vocabulary upon the devoted heads of the probation officers who took his erring sire from the fold. He heeded not their assurance

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that he should henceforth receive proper care. The affront to the family name was not to be overlooked.

The elder Lawrence, touched at last by his son's outburst of indignation, tried to console him, while weeping maudlin tears on the officer's shoulder. "Thash awright, Jim," he soothed. "Cap'n Lawrence washn't yer gra'-grandfather 't all, he washn't. Only one his mess-boys, thash all. So don' feel bad 'bout it, Jim."

Stub sat down suddenly on a rickety three-legged chair and mutely watched the officers lead his father away. Lawrence Senior died the next day from dilirium tremens, but that is neither here nor there. What took place in Stub's mind as his little world came crumbling down about his ears can only be surmised, but at any rate he soon slammed the door forever on the squalid shack and determinedly sallied forth, turning around once to shake a grimy fist upon his late abode. It may be conjectured that he had lacked the courage to face "de gang" again in view of his disgrace.

At an ice-fringed cob-dock on the water front lay the three-masted schooner *Live Oak*, deep laden and ready for sea. Blinking through her rigging the cheerless waning sun threw a long network of shadows on the wharf. The shivering ragamuffin perched on the string-piece, sniffed hungrily at the fragrant wood smoke which drifted from the galley smokepipe, tantalizingly indicative of warmth and good cheer below. Then he pricked up his ears at the talk of two dirty stevedores as they stopped on their homeward way to look at the schooner.

"This ole hooker is bound ter the West Injies, they tell me," said one. "How'd ye like ter be goin' down there into summer, Bill?"

"Don't say a word!" exclaimed the other knowingly. "Them's fruit-box shooks he's got aboard, ain't they? S'pose he'll git a good thing outer that."

"She ain't fit ter go offshore, but better men than ole Cap'n What's-his-name here has bit when big freights is offered. And then again it may be an insurance job, ye know," opined Pete knowingly.

"Oh, I cal-late she's fit enough now the hurricane season's over," said Bill. "'Tain't none of our dinged business what they do anyways. There's tricks to all trades. But say, wouldn't ye like ter be goin' down on one of them sugar plantations, though?"

"Oh, don't rub it in no more," said the other roughly. "Come inter the Crown here and have a nip of Jamaiky rum on me. That's about how nigh we'll git ter the West Injies."

"Down there into summer." "Work on a sugar plantation."

The magic words lingered in the waif's mind, a lure from a dreamed-of Eden. "Gee!" he reflected. "Dat listens good ter me!" He shinned monkey-like down the schooner's mizzen shrouds to the deck as the skipper's inquisitive grizzled head and clay pipe appeared in the companion-way.

"Cap'n," piped the urchin, "wanter ship a man?"

"Where is he?" drawled this official insolently, as he emptied his dudeen on the palm of his hand and tossed the ash over the rail.

"Aw, git onter yerself!" retorted the youngster, assuming a truly Annapolis "brace." "Where'd ye t'ink? In Rooshy?"

"Run home and grow, Shorty," advised the master of the *Live Oak*, pocketing his pipe and gnawing the corner from a black plug of Anchor Cut. "You couldn't pull a hen off'n the roost."

The boss of the gang wasn't used to back-talk. "Aw, fer de love of Mike cut it!" he said. "Your ole lop-sided sled ain't de only chip in de puddle, see? And wot's more, I kin lick any—"

"Git!" said the captain impassively, but in a manner which left no possibility of misunderstanding, as he stepped out on deck with a broom in his hand. "Jest l[illegible]e ketch ye aboard agin and I'll—"

But Stub was already ove[illegible]e caplog of the wharf. The captain slammed the companion-way slide with a muttered objurgation pertaining indefinitely to the genus "wharf rat" and returned to his warm stove. A stone nicked the cabin spitefully and bounced overboard, but the "man" behind the projectile was disappearing behind a convenient building.

Some hours later, however, he might have been seen boarding the *Live Oak* under cover of protecting darkness, despite the irate shipmaster's warning. His arms gripped a nondescript bundle, to the contents of which, it must be truthfully said, various fruit stands had unwittingly contributed during the friendly hour between the dark and the daylight. Never before had Stub stolen, but he realized bitterly that he was no longer a Lawrence.

Stub had not roamed the Riverport water front ten years for nothing. He had not personally inspected from keelson to topmasthead half the coasters entering port without acquiring sundry nautical information. He knew that the hold, chock-a-block with shooks, held no refuge, but that under the forecastle head, forward of the windlass, was a recess just about big enough for a fellow of his size, and just about secluded enough for one who had been shooed off the deck by an outraged captain only a short time before. So into this darksome cavern he crawled, obeying the call of the "nice warm winter."

The tug which came for the *Live Oak* next morning had to break a channel through the thin ice which glassed the stream from bank to bank. It was evident that few more vessels would clear before a winter's white embargo was laid over the river. Stub heard much scurrying, thrashing of arms and stamping of frosty feet over his head before the *Live Oak* was made up in a flotilla of three other lumber schooners, towed two by two, with the white tug ahead.

Stub saw nothing of the beautiful river, as they passed down between fertile uplands teeming with thriving farms, under frowning, green-crowned bluffs, past stranded flattening hulks of worn-out coasters, around blind turns which brought forth gruff commands to the helmsman. In his cramped quarters he heard only the hoarse blasts of the tug as she whistled for the bends, and the dulled tinkle of water beneath the schooner's bluff bow. There was else only an occasional muffled crunch as a stray cake of shore ice encountered the oncoming craft, then worsted, scaled edgewise into the brown depths only to pop to the surface in her bubbling wake.

After eternities the tug ended her twenty-mile task at the mouth of the river and the released hawser splashed under the bow. There came the pleasant "talk" of blocks as the crew on the deckload laboriously swayed-up the patched foresail and mainsail; more crackling of blocks as the jibs crawled up the wire stays, and the schooner buckled down to work in earnest as she felt the push of the big spanker. A brisk nor'wester from off the blue hills gave the *Live Oak* a fine run down the bay and a good start on her long voyage.

After a two days' foaming "slant" up the coast and over Nantucket Shoals the obliging nor'wester gave way to a smoky sou'-wester which drove the *Live Oak* into Vineyard Haven with a fleet of west-bound lumber carriers, baffled like herself. An anchor dived to bottom with a rumble of chain which nearly deafened the little refugee, and a rush of rusty smoke from the aged links made him gasp for breath. The furling of the sails was followed by the monotonous clank of the pumps, but Stub knew that pumping was part of the day's work in the coasting fleet. It was still cold, so Stub, whose ideas of geography were limited, knew that the pot of gold at the foot of his rainbow was not yet reached.

Next dawn the crew sweated and swore at the slowly clicking windlass within a few feet of Stub, as the fleet again spread its dingy pinions. A link of the cable jammed in the hawse pipe and a seaman crawled into Stub's lair to pry it clear. He, fearing eviction,

let out a yell and the fellow scrambled back in terror. A smoky lantern was thrust into the gloom on the end of a pike pole, and Stub was speedily hauled out by the nape of the neck, amid the guffaws of the crew.

But the skipper failed to see the joke. He recognized his small tormentor, and even the once-intrepid Stub's heart failed him. He was no longer a Lawrence, he remembered. "I—I was jest goin' ashore, boss," he explained.

"Not by a damn sight, you ain't!" snarled the captain. "You're goin' ter help us git this anchor and then you'll git back in there ag'in till I think what I'll do to ye, ye little—"

"Go easy, Cap, he ain't very big!" remonstrated the sympathetic mate, and Stub winked at him in sly gratitude.

"Shut up, blast ye!" roared the captain. "Who's master here, you or me? I told this little devil ter keep away from this vessel, and he'll wish he had!"

Stub's champion subsided muttering, and the stowaway lent his small strength to getting the anchor. Then he was kicked back into his hole to wait the captain's vengeance, while the *Live Oak* headed bravely offshore to meet the northeast trade winds which blew somewhere beyond bleak No Man's Land. That way few vessels crossed her course; only a silent many-funneled New York liner distantly bowing to the swell, or a floundering little white fruiter Boston bound.

Towards noon Stub saw the captain, a grim personification of fate, looming on the edge of the deckload, and he decided that whoever undertook to extract him from his lair would have the time of his life.

Then the mate came up behind the captain, and Stub heard him say "swam ashore" and "harbor." The skipper went aft cursing beneath his breath, as was his wont. The mate followed without once looking Stub's way.

Meanwhile the *Live Oak* worked south slowly, now winged-out before the trades, now bucking a trespassing southerly chop in the weedy Gulf Stream. For the *Live Oak* was of that well-defined type of architecture which "butts three times at a sea and then goes around it," and consequently sails "like a toad in a bucket of tar." On the coast she would have been squared-away for the nearest harbor at the first sign of foul weather, but here the most convenient haven was two hundred miles shoreward.

The result was that when, a week out from Vineyard Haven, the *Live Oak* was tried by an easterly storm whose like she had not seen

for years except, perhaps, from behind a breakwater, her ancient hull was found wanting. They ran her before it till she threatened to broach-to, then hove her to and with difficulty reefed the slatting canvas. But she cowered under the lash of the screaming blast and giant combing seas till the cemented old seams gaped wide with the strain. A tired crew took spells at the overworked pumps, but the task of pumping the Atlantic back into itself was as ever devoid of satisfactory results. Soon the *Live Oak* was hopelessly waterlogged. The deckload went quickly as green seas toppled aboard and thundered clear across her.

Soon she would have rolled over on her beam ends, but the crew eased her for a time by letting the sails go by the run. In great ballooning bags they bellied over the side to leeward. Captain and crew sought refuge on the cabin top, then were driven to the mizzen rigging. To windward hung the sea mountains higher and higher, though beheaded in mid-onslaught by the hurricane.

Stub watched the scuppers spout water across the strip of deck between him and the foremast; then a well developed inland sea swashed inside the bulwarks. Still, with fear of betraying the friendly mate, he forbore to seek a safer position. But when a breaker lapped into his shelter he saw there was no other way to get through alive, and squirmed out of what was in a fair way to become a submarine grotto.

The crew were tumbling into the battered yawl-boat bobbing on the lee quarter. Before he could make himself heard or run the gauntlet of the chaotic half-sunken deck, they cast off. To leeward Stub saw a steamer hove-to and waiting, long feathers of spume streaming off her bows after each lunge. Then the fangs of the tempest nipped him again as a hissing crest broke over the forecastle, and Stub jumped into the fore rigging.

Another rain squall blotted the vessel from sight. Stub saw the mate gesticulating in his direction, evidently trying to prove to an obdurate skipper that he was still aboard; but the well-meant fabrication had proved a boomerang, for the yawl-boat drove on into the thickness and the succor that waited.

Stub spent the night in the crosstrees, flayed by shreds of a ruined topsail and stung by sleet on the wings of a sixty-mile gale. In its wild arcs the flailing spar strove vainly to snap him far into the sea.

But morning saw the steamer still hovering in the schooner's lee, dimly visible through the driving storm. However, it had moderated, and Stub saw her steam up to windward and put over one of her own boats. As it bore down on the shoulders of the swell he

saw a long snaky line trailing behind. He picked his way down from the rigging and waited, clinging to the sheer pole.

"That mate wasn't lyin' after all," said one of the sailors as they came near enough to see Stub. "My Gawd, Sam, do yer believe—"

"Oh, I wouldn't wonder; that cap'n's a rum one," said Sam calmly, anticipating his question and shifting his seat for another view of the wallowing wreck. "Prob'ly had it in for the kid."

"Come on, now, and step lively!" ordered a big red-faced man who stood in the stern of the gig with a tiller rope in each hand, and scowling at the small lone passenger.

"Wot yer towin' dat string for, cull?" asked Stub deliberately.

"None yer damn business!" retorted the officer, mad at being ordered out in such weather. "Come, pile in here, I tell yer!"

Seamen climbed aboard the wreck and, waist-deep in the swash, began hauling in the light line, to which was bent a heavy towing hawser.

"Git inter this boat, ye little hoodlum, or I'll fire ye in!" pursued the irritable officer. "We've stood by all night for ye, and now, by the great hook block, you'll come along without no sass if yer know when yer well off!"

The leader of the "Riverbank Gang" felt his gorge rising. He had been peaceably disposed, but nobody had spoken to him that way since Red Sullivan, chief of the "East Siders," had had three teeth and a thumb broken because of his temerity. And this big blowhard didn't scare him for a cent. "I t'ink yer lyin,' cull," he said calmly. "Youse wouldn't wait for de likes of me. T'ink I'm skeered ter stay aboard, do yer?"

The mate of the steamer, speechless with rage, made a reckless leap out of the gig at the audacious stowaway. Stub went up the humming shrouds like a spider, and the ponderous mate dared not follow. Going aloft in a gale of wind, even after it had moderated some, wasn't part of his steamer training.

"Stay up there and freeze ter death, then, ye crazy little fool!" bellowed the foiled official.

"Ya-a-ah!" taunted Stub from aloft. "'Don't Give Up De Ship' is me middle name, see? T'ink I'm skeered ter stay here, hey?"

Fortunately the mate didn't hear the crew's appreciative snicker. They made fast the towing hawser and returned to their ship with no further heed to the belligerent castaway. Indeed the mate could have done no more. The cavorting steamer slowly straightened out the line, and her sodden prize, kept afloat only by her buoyant cargo, nosed wearily about and headed for the coast.